

Origin and History
of
Methodism in Wales



David Young

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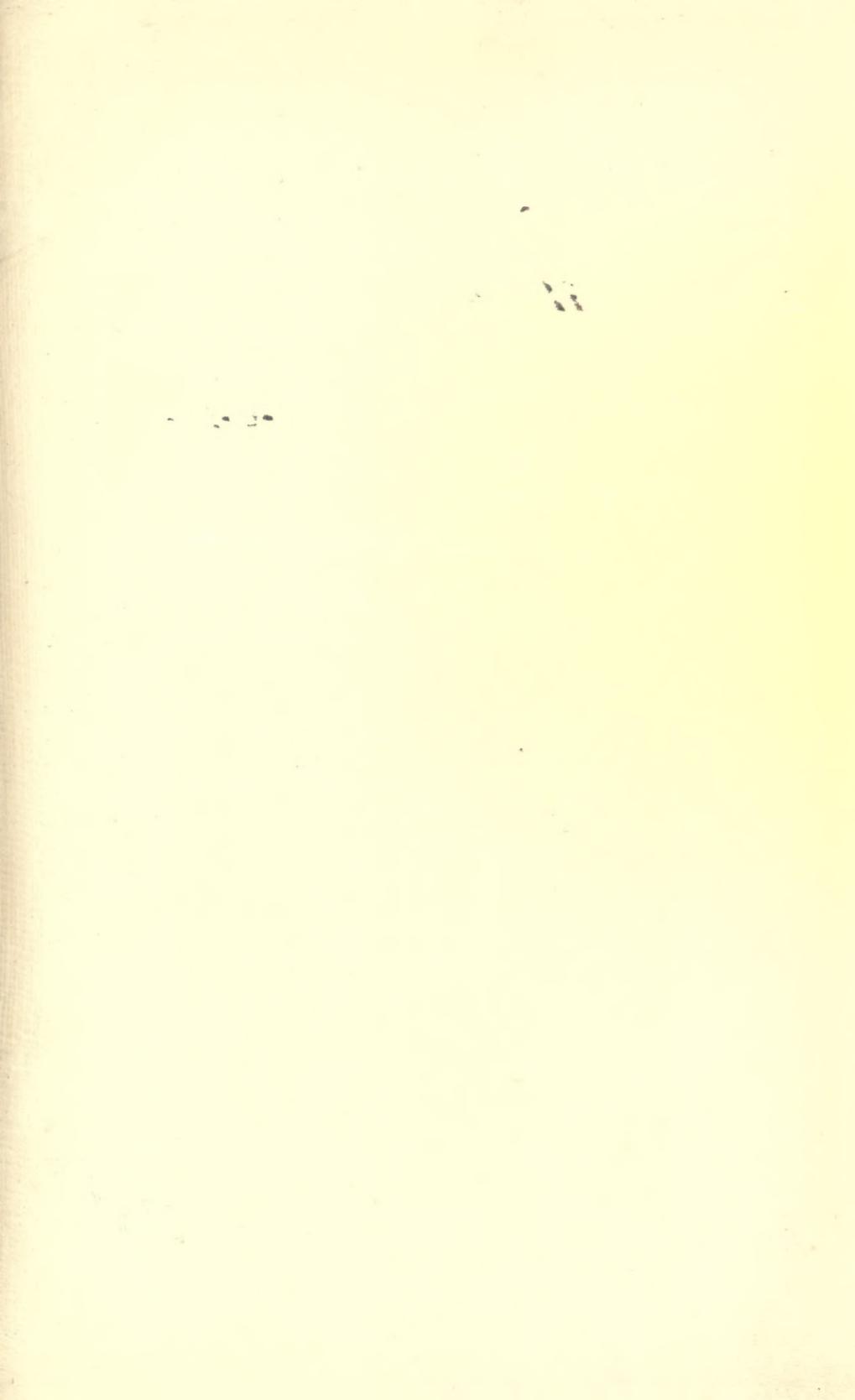
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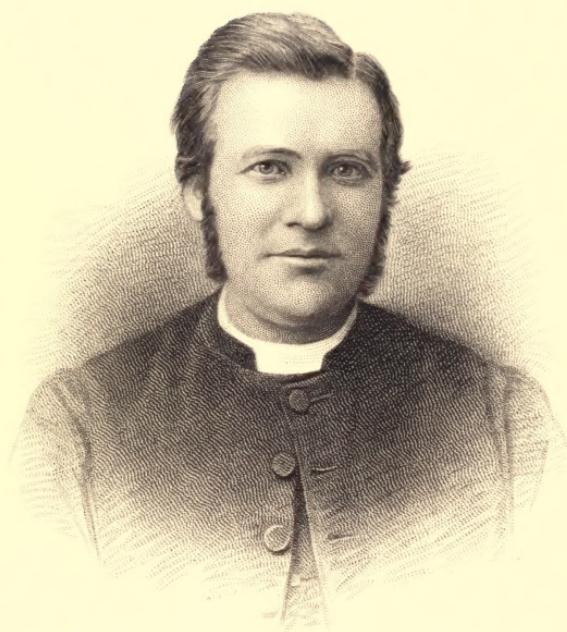


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THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY
OF
METHODISM
IN
WALES AND THE BORDERS

MORRISON AND GIBB, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.



REV^D DAVID YOUNG.

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REV. DAVID YOUNG.

THE ORIGIN AND HISTORY
OF
METHODISM
IN
WALES AND THE BORDERS

By DAVID YOUNG

*WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY THE
REV. HUGH PRICE HUGHES, M.A.*

London

CHARLES H. KELLY, 2, CASTLE ST., CITY ROAD, E.C.
AND 66, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

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TO

FREDERICK LEWIS DAVIS, Esq., LL.D., J.P.

OF

BRYNDDERWEN, FERNDALE, AND MAINDIFF COURT, ABERGAVENNY

HIGH SHERIFF OF GLAMORGANSHIRE IN 1891

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED

(WITH HIS KIND PERMISSION)

AS AN EXPRESSION OF THE AUTHOR'S PROFOUND ESTEEM FOR HIS

NOBLE QUALITIES AND HIGH MORAL CHARACTER

AND AS THE WORTHY REPRESENTATIVE OF

ONE OF THE MOST DESERVEDLY POPULAR AND SINCERELY

BELOVED FAMILIES IN THE PRINCIPALITY

WHOSE

PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS WERE DEVOUT, GENEROUS, AND EXEMPLARY

WESLEYAN METHODISTS

LEADING SUPPORTERS OF WELSH EDUCATION

AND OF EVERY PHILANTHROPIC AND RELIGIOUS ENTERPRISE

AND ESPECIALLY HIS CONNECTION

WITH THE EXTENSION OF METHODISM IN SOUTH WALES

AND HIS SYMPATHY AND KINDNESS

TO THE MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL.

P R E F A C E.

THE Welsh reader has within his reach a most valuable history of Calvinistic Methodism, of the Baptist Churches, and of Congregationalism, but up to the present time, neither in Welsh nor English, has he an opportunity of knowing the origin and history of Wesleyan Methodism in Wales. It was this fact which, when urged upon the writer by leading Wesleyans and others outside the pale of Methodism, influenced him in undertaking this interesting and onerous task. It is our one desire in this volume to bring before the public the convictions and persecutions, the fidelity and courage, the joy and sorrow, the success and failure, of a noble band of men, who under Divine Providence were instrumental in the formation and growth of Wesleyan Methodism within and on the borders of the Principality.

Until recent times Wales was considered devoid of any special attraction except for the angler and the tourist. Popular opinion beyond the limits of the Principality affirmed that its literature was scanty, that its poetry was more weird than wise, that the eloquence of the pulpit was more extravagant than excellent, and that the inhabitants were more superstitious than intelligent. Nearer acquaintance with the country and people is dissipating these wrong impressions, and as the result it is discovered that, on the west coast of the island, there is a country whose religious life is as interesting as its scenery, whose literature keeps pace with the march of the times, whose poetry is as rich as

its mines, whose music is as melodious as the minstrelsy of its words, and whose pulpit eloquence is as refreshing as its streams, and, like its mountains, though often rugged, is often grand.

‘It is not too much to say,’ said a modern writer, ‘that in that little land, during the last hundred years, midst its wild glens and sombre mountain shadows, its villages retreating into desolate moorlands, there have appeared such a succession and race of remarkable preachers as we suppose could not be equalled, in their own popular power over the hearts and minds of thousands, for their eminence and variety in any other country.’

History, wrote Carlyle, as it lies at the root of all science, is also the first distinct product of man’s spiritual nature, his earliest impression of what can be called thought. He further adds that religion is the chief fact with regard to man and nation.

During the present and in a smaller degree the past century, the leaders of the churches have been the ‘modellers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or to attain,’ and the social, intellectual, and moral position of Wales to-day is the outer material result of thoughts and actions of the leaders of religious movements in Wales. The Welsh press, private schools, British, National, and Board Schools, and more recently the Theological and University Colleges, have been valuable auxiliaries; but those who know the Principality best will willingly admit that the pulpit and the Sunday schools have created the demand and prepared the way for the establishment of these institutions. The pulpit is still the greatest power in Wales. The Welsh people love preaching, and in hundreds of villages the anniversary, usually held on a week-day, is the greatest event of the year. In the work of reformation the pulpit has been the elevator and civilizer of the nation.

Many attempts have been made to account for the power of the Welsh pulpit. One finds the secret of this power in the natural temperament of the Celtic family, which we are told is more sensitive, more quickly and deeply wrought upon by the poetry of religion ; a second contends that the Welsh language is better adapted as an instrument of public speech ; while a third finds a reason in the weakness of the press, and other such rivals. In each of these explanations there may be a modicum of truth, but the real strength is found in the divine grace which stamps these preachers as the messengers of the Most High. The true prophets of the Welsh pulpit have wisely endeavoured to clothe abstract truths in the brightest garb of metaphor ; they have earnestly sought the divine unction, and delivered their message out of burning hearts, with tongues as of fire, and they have conquered with God and man.

Theology, poetry, music, and philosophy have largely occupied the Welsh mind. The leading Welsh preachers have diligently and honestly studied the best books of other nations ; they welcome new light, old and new theology. Higher criticism will be calmly considered, but almost without exception they hold to the fundamental doctrines of Christianity with unswerving loyalty.

The early Wesleyan preachers in Wales were deeply convinced as to the divinity of their mission; hence they counted not their ‘life dear to them’ so that they ‘might finish their course with joy,’ and testify to their fellow-men ‘the gospel of the grace of God.’ They were severely tried. The open persecution to which Charles Wesley was subjected at Cardiff, Thomas Taylor at Tenby, James Wood at Carmarthen, Richard Harrison and Bryan in Flintshire, Jones (Bathafarn) in the counties of Carnarvon and Anglesey, while very trying at the time, was overruled for good. Other forms of persecution, such as the attempts to prevent the Wesleyans having land upon which to build chapels, or cottages in

which to worship in, to injure them in their circumstances by turning them out of homes or work, by doctrinal misrepresentation, and a systematic effort to ignore their existence, did more harm than open persecution. It is also fair to say that they were most generously treated by a few in various places.

It has been our endeavour, while extracting the essence of biographies, books, private records, names, words, creeds, and traditions, not only to recover from the deluge of time, but also to give a just estimate of the character and work of a number of Christian heroes, as shall be helpful to present and future generations in the regeneration of society and the bringing back this prodigal world to the home of a loving Father.

'Truth comes to us from the past,' wrote Bovee, 'as gold is washed down Sierra Nevada, in minute but precious particles, and intermixed with alloy, the debris of centuries.' We have drawn our material for this volume from every available source, and earnestly hope that the reader may find some gold particles which may become of eternal value. The *Eurgrawn* has been the richest treasury, and more especially the historical sketches of the late Lot Hughes and John Williams (2nd). Biographies written by Dr. Jones, Samuel Davies (2nd), William Rowlands, Dr. William Davies, Isaac Jenkins, Richard Pritchard, W. H. Evans, John Evans (B), Hugh Jones (B), Richard Morgan (A), James Buckley, John Jones (Humilis), have been invaluable to us. We are also indebted to Dr. Thomas Rees, Dr. John Thomas, John Hughes, Dr. Owen Thomas, William Williams, Joshua Thomas, and Thomas Morgan (Dowlais), the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, and many others too numerous to mention. I have also to acknowledge the assistance of the Rev. John Pellow, W. Collett, and Mr. Sprigg in the revision of the sheets. The reader will be led to many small and unknown villages and hamlets, in which he will find true heroes and

eminent soldiers of the Cross. He will be convinced, we trust, that Wesleyan Methodism has been raised up by God, and has fully justified its existence in the Principality.

We wish to remind the reader that, unless otherwise explained, the term Methodism is always used for Wesleyan Methodism, which is most natural to the English reader. In grouping our Societies and Circuits into counties it has been impossible in every instance to avoid repetition. In the many references to other Churches than those of the Wesleyans we have done so from a sense of duty to those we represent, and not from any desire to stir up old events for which the Churches of to-day are not responsible. We are glad to think that the various denominations in Wales are becoming more and more united; and we see no reason why the Methodist Churches should not strive together for greater unity, and with a bold, united effort win greater victories for Christ, and hasten the day when the Principality shall be a ‘crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.’

SHEFFIELD, *July 1893.*

E R R A T A.

- Trelech *instead of* Treleck, page 26.
Machen ,, Machan, ,, 64.
Herne ,, Hern, ,, 115.
Pennal ,, Penual, ,, 303.

The following names have been accidentally left out :—The Revs. Lewis Thomas, Richard Morgan (B), David Morgan, David Thomas, E. Albert Evans, and Evan Isaac, in the Aberystwyth Circuit ; Revs. Thomas J. Pritchard and Jacob Pritchard, Ferndale ; Richard Hughes, Llanidloes ; Samuel Parry Jones, Llanasa,—all men of ability and usefulness.

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INTRODUCTION.

AT the earnest request of my fellow-countryman and brother-minister, the author of this work, I write a brief introduction to it. My hesitation in accepting this simple but honourable task was due to the fact that it seemed to me there were so many others who could accomplish it with much more authority and efficiency. But no one will rejoice more than I over the appearance of this painstaking and conscientious effort to meet a great want. Wales is still to the great majority of English people a *terra incognita*. Our religious history during the last hundred and fifty years has been so strikingly different in many respects from that of the English people, that it is almost impossible for our fellow-citizens on this side of the Severn to understand our religious and civil aspirations. Nothing could be of greater service both to the nation and to Christianity, than a resolute effort on the part of the mighty English people to understand the other inhabitants of these islands. It is in such simple and unpretentious volumes as this that the real history of nations is written. All differences are at bottom religious differences. The religious question underlies every other question, and every nation is what it is mainly as the result of the religious influences which affect the masses of the people. In this book Englishmen will find an adequate sample of the causes which have produced modern Wales and the extraordinary awakening of life and aspiration which the hills of Wales witness to-day. Mr. Young has

taken immense trouble to collect memorials of the Christ-like men and women who in their own day were despised and rejected, but who in every succeeding day are increasingly recognized as the true makers of empire.

Methodism has had a potent share in the great religious movement by which the Welsh people have been lifted out of the superstition, heathenism, and degradation in which they were sunk at the beginning of the last century. It is to be hoped that English Methodists, and especially English Methodist preachers, will familiarize themselves with the history of Wesleyan Methodism in Wales. They will probably be surprised to learn how great a part the Methodist Revival in its two sections has played in the evangelization of the Principality. They will also be in all probability astonished to discover how many preachers Wales has given to English pulpits, and how much influence the little country has exerted over its huge neighbour.

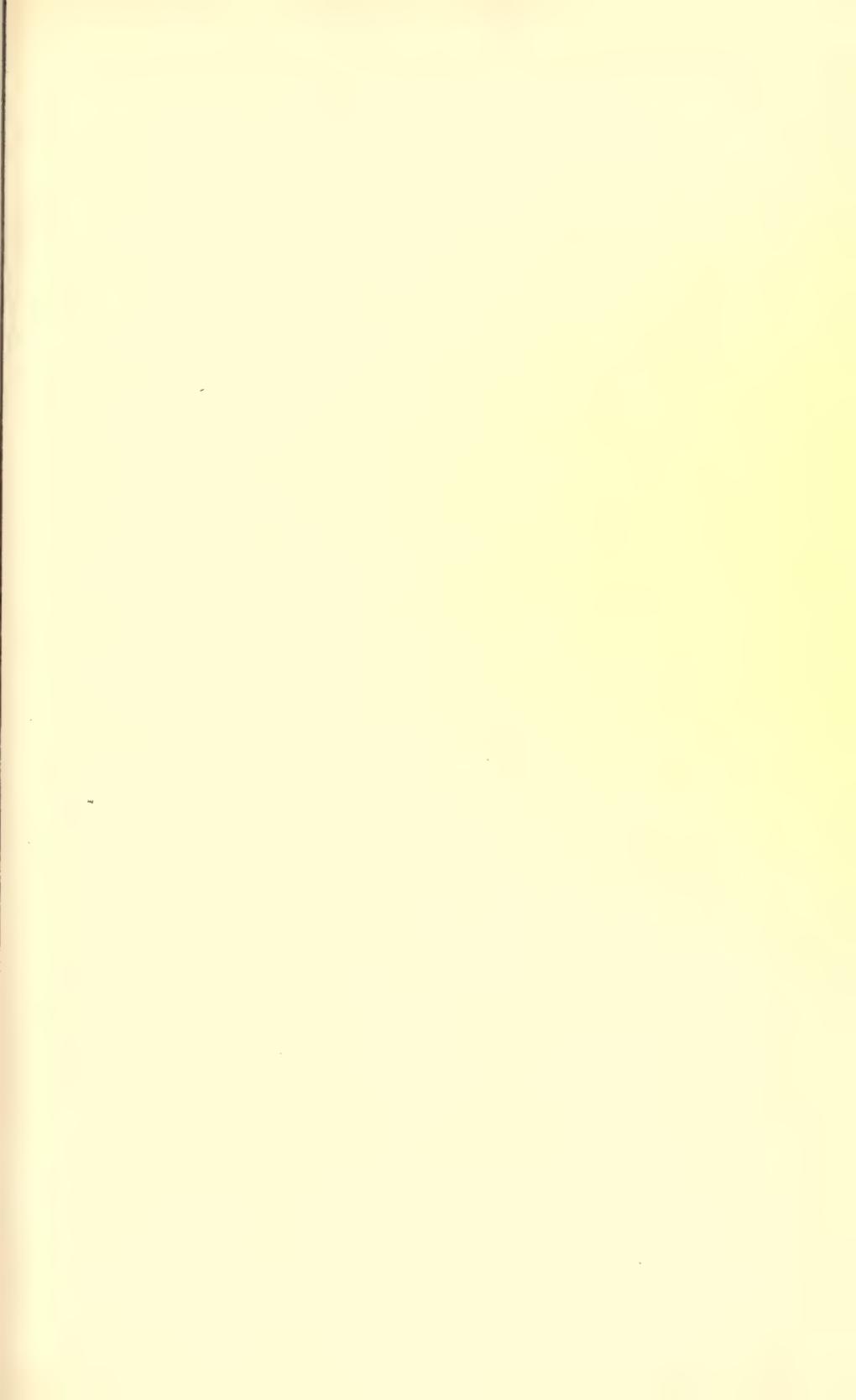
It is singularly appropriate that this volume should appear just when the British Conference meets for the first time in Cardiff, and when there is a stronger desire than ever, of which the Cardiff Conference is a conspicuous sign, to do full justice to Welsh Methodism. To us Welshmen the story of Wesleyan Methodism in Wales while it fires our hearts with an enthusiastic desire to emulate the heroism and devotion of our fathers, nevertheless brings pain. The work began so well, spread so rapidly, was so full of the highest promise, and then it was suddenly and permanently crippled by the failure of the Conference seventy years ago to realize how blessed the work was, and how amply it would repay temporary encouragement and support. Thank God times are completely changed. There is now the strongest disposition to promote a great Forward Movement in the Principality; and with the heartiest disposition to further the Gospel, we have once more one of those divinely favourable opportunities when all things work together for good. The

utter disappearance of theological and ecclesiastical controversy among Protestant Nonconformists, the removal of financial difficulties, and the wonderful new awakening in Wales furnish an unprecedented opportunity of repeating the heroic enterprises of the early days of Methodism. Notwithstanding the wonderful progress of the Calvinistic Methodist, Congregationalist, and Baptist Churches, there are tens of thousands of our fellow-countrymen outside all Churches. We, as well as others, have a mission to them.

I need not commend this book to my fellow-countrymen. We are all attracted to it both by our intense patriotism and by the fact that we read in its pages brief and pregnant biographical statements about our own fathers and grandfathers. But I do most earnestly pray that this volume may move our hearts to their very depths with an intense passion for souls, and with an irresistible agony of prayerful desire for a repetition of those great, overwhelming revivals of religion which were so frequent in the palmy days of early Methodism, and which are more wanted to-day than ever. The great need of the Church now is, what Wales had pre-eminently at the end of the last century and at the beginning of this, mighty, intelligent, and God-inspired preaching. Nothing can take the place of preaching. Nothing can do the work of preaching. But preaching is impossible without a heart of love and a tongue of fire. May God grant us both.

HUGH PRICE HUGHES.

8 TAVITON STREET,
GORDON SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.
July 8, 1893.





Woodburyprint.

Waterlow & Sons Limited.

A. Price Hughes

HISTORY OF METHODISM IN WALES.



CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY INTO BRITAIN.

When introduced—Tertullian—Origen—Irenæus—Gildas—Traditions respecting the Apostles—Pomponia—Claudia—Caradog—Bran—Welsh Triads—Nicene Council—Llanelltyd and Bangor Colleges—St. David—Dyfrig—Tilo—Cattwg the Wise—Howell the Good—Pelagius—Serverus—Missionaries to Brittany and Ireland—Augustine and Welsh Bishops.

THERE is no doubt that Christianity was planted in Britain at a very early date, although it is very difficult, if not impossible, to say precisely when or through whose instrumentality the work was done. As early as A.D. 208, Tertullian speaks of the territories of Spain, the various tribes of Gaul, and places in Britain not reached by the Romans, as being subject to Christ. Origen also, a few years later, writes: ‘The power of God our Saviour is with them in Britain also who are separated from our world.’ Stubbs considers that all the evidence alleged for the existence of a Christian Church in Britain in the second century is unhistorical; and quotes Irenæus, who, writing in the latter half of that century, gives an enumeration of the churches then established; and although the churches in the West are mentioned one by one, no reference is made to any British Church. It is difficult to account for this omission, if any

organized church existed at the time in Britain, unless it was that the writer regarded it as forming part of the Church of Gaul. But in all probability no church structure had been built, and no bishop or bishops had yet been appointed. It must be assumed, of course, that the gospel had been preached, and converts had been won among the Britons before any ecclesiastical order was established in the country.

According to Gildas, the planting of Christianity in Britain took place prior to the conquest of Paulinus, A.D. 61; and although Gildas is not always reliable, there is nothing improbable in this statement of his. Very early in the first century London became quite a flourishing centre of commercial activity, to which came merchants and traders from various European ports. The Roman occupation would also mean constant intercourse between the country and other parts of the empire. Tertullian tells us that in his time Christians were to be found in every place, in the cities, in fortresses, in towns and market-places, and even in the very camp; and doubtless this was also true of a much earlier time. So that it is not very difficult to imagine Christian disciples among those traders and soldiers passing across to Britain, who would seize the opportunity to make known to the natives with whom they came in contact the gospel of the grace of God.

The honour of planting the British Church has been claimed for St. Paul, for St. Peter also, and others among the apostles; in fact, for not fewer than ten different agents. It is not difficult to see how the tradition arose respecting St. Paul's connection with the work. In the Epistle to the Romans, xv., reference is made to an intended visit to Spain, and it is thought that the apostle carried out this intention some time during the interval between his first imprisonment at Rome and the close of his life; and assuming that this journey westward was undertaken, it is not impossible that in connection therewith St. Paul also visited Britain. But there

is no proof that he did so. It is very doubtful whether he ever carried out his purpose to visit Spain. The statement of Clemens Romanus—who is thought to be the Clemens referred to in Philippians iv. 3—that St. Paul, ‘having taught righteousness to the whole world, went to the extreme limit of the West,’ can scarcely be regarded as placing the matter beyond doubt. It is true, the ‘extreme limit of the West’ sometimes meant the British Isles, but it was also applied to Spain, and Clemens may have used the expression in this more restricted sense only. The vague references in other early writers to St. Paul’s connection with the work in Britain, may mean nothing more than that agents, who had been converted through his instrumentality, with his sanction and authority laboured among the Britons. And it is easier to see how in this way St. Paul’s name became associated with the beginning of the British Church.

At a very early date British prisoners of war were sent to Rome, and doubtless other natives for other reasons found their way to the Imperial city, where they doubtless were brought into connection with Christianity, and also with St. Paul himself, who was also taken to Rome in consequence of his appeal to Caesar.

Pomponia Græcina, the wife of Plautius, the conqueror of Britain, was accused of a foreign superstition—Christianity in all probability; and, according to ancient usage, was tried by her husband in the presence of her relatives, who acquitted her. According to tradition, this lady was a Briton as well as a Christian, whose name was Gwladys. Whether or not she had ever seen St. Paul, it is quite possible that coming into contact with the Christian disciples in Rome, and being reckoned among them, she had seen, if not read, his letter to the Roman Church.

The Claudia referred to by the apostle in his second letter to Timothy, iv., is conjectured to be the Claudia who is spoken of by Martial as the foreign lady who had become the wife of

his friend Pudens. And it is claimed that this foreign lady was Claudia Rufina, or Gwladys Ruffydd, a daughter of the British Prince Caradog.

The British captives, Caradog and his family, who fell into the hands of the Roman general, through the treachery of the Queen of the Brigantes, were conveyed to Rome in the year 51 A.D. The story is well known how Caradog, by his manly and dignified bearing, impressed the Roman Emperor, who set him at liberty. After a while, we are told, he was allowed to return to Britain, where he became tributary to Claudius. His father Bran and Eurgain his daughter were detained in Rome for seven years as hostages for Caradog, and during this prolonged stay Bran, it is said, became acquainted with St. Paul, and through his teaching became a Christian. On his return to his native country, he brought back with him the four missionaries—Ilid, Arwystli, Cyndaf, and Mawan—to preach the gospel to his people.

According to an old Welsh triad, ‘Bran the Blessed, son of Llyr Llediaith, first brought the faith in Christ to the nation of the Cymry from Rome, when he had been seven years hostage for his son Caradog, whom the Romans had taken captive after he had been betrayed by Aregwedd Voeddawg.’ Another old Welsh book—*The Genealogy of Iestyn ab Gwrgant*—says that Cyllin, styled the Saint, son of Caradog, who began to reign some time in the latter half of the first century—probably as Caradog’s successor—was a wise and gentle king, and in his time were many of the Cymry converted to the Christian faith through the teaching of the choir of Eurgain, and many godly men from Greece and Rome were in Wales in his time.

If the statements of the early historians be at all trustworthy, there must have been an ecclesiastical order established in the country prior to the fourth century. Among the bishops present at the Council of Arles, A.D. 314, were Eborius of Eboracum, Restitutus of London, and Adelfius of Caerleon.

Athanasius states that the British Church gave its consent to the faith as defined by the Nicene Council, A.D. 325. British bishops were either present or they gave their consent to the decisions of the Council of Sardica, A.D. 347. The three British bishops present at the Synod of Rimini, A.D. 359, are said to have been so poor as to be obliged to accept the Imperial allowance which none of the other ecclesiastics present were in need of. The Diocletian persecution which raged at the beginning of the fourth century spread to Britain, where were found native converts to the faith prepared to suffer rather than deny their allegiance to Christ. Aaron and Julius suffered martyrdom at Caerleon, and Alban at Verulamium; many others also died for their faith. ‘When the storm of persecution ceased, the faithful Christians, who, during the time of danger had hidden in the woods, deserts, and secret caves, appeared in public, rebuilt the churches, and founded temples of the holy martyrs.’

Large and important educational institutions were early established. That at Lantwit Major, of which Illtyd, or Iltutus, was the principal, in 520 attracted students from every Christian country. It possessed seven halls or colleges, and 400 hostels for students, and at one time there were not fewer than 2000 students attached. Prince Arthur and other princes, St. David also, were educated there. Another institution was established at Bangor Iscoed, Flintshire, by Dunawd, the father of Deiniol, or Daniel, who afterwards became Bishop of Bangor in Carnarvonshire. Institutions such as these, especially Lantwit (or Llanilltyd fawr), take considerable time to attain the position and efficiency, and to win the widespread reputation, which historians attribute to the celebrated college in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Among the able and godly men whose names adorn the early history of the Church in Wales are David, the founder of the See of St. David's; Dyfrig, the founder of Llandaff; Teilo the Great, Padarn, Dynawt, Paulin, Daniel, Cattwg the

Wise, and Howel Dda (Howell the Good), a Welsh prince whose laws, still extant in the Welsh language, are so full of the genius of Christianity, that they need only be read to be admired. Dr. Wotton was so much impressed by what he heard of them that he learnt the Welsh language in order that he might translate them into Latin.

Early in the fifth century the British Church acquired some notoriety in connection with the Pelagian heresy. Pelagius was himself a Briton and a man of great saintliness of character, and these two things tended very largely to the spread of his teachings among the people. In response to an appeal for help, a Synod of the Gaelic Church deputed two bishops, Germanus (Garmon) and Lupus (Bleiddyn), to visit the British Church and put down the heresy. According to the Welsh genealogies, Germanus was the son of Rhedyw, and closely related to the people to whom he was sent both by race and blood. This fact possibly influenced his being chosen, as it certainly secured for him a favourable reception among the people. A public disputation held soon after their arrival resulted in a triumphant victory for the champions of the faith over the Pelagian teachers. The heresy appears to have sprung up again, making a second mission necessary, A.D. 447. This time Germanus was accompanied by a bishop called Severus. The heresy was now so completely vanquished that no further trouble was occasioned thereby. Several interesting legends stand associated with the name of St. Germanus, who must have exercised a great and lasting influence upon the Church. He is said to have founded the monastic institutions of Llancarvan and Llanilltyd, and also to have consecrated St. Dubricius. The early British Church also made its influence widely felt by its missionary zeal. From Wales and Cornwall bands of earnest and devoted men passed into Brittany and Ireland to spread the faith of Christ. St. Patrick was assisted in the evangelization of Ireland by British missionaries, and when in after years there

came sad religious decline and apostasy, David, Cadoc, and Gildas founded a second order of saints, and undertook the work of restoring the declining religion of Ireland. To this second order Columba belonged, who with his followers became the instruments of re-establishing the Christian religion in Northumbria and East Anglia, after it had been well-nigh exterminated by the pagan Saxons.

The Saxon conquest was one of sheer dispossession and slaughter. The priests were slain at the altar, and their churches fired, whilst the poor people who failed to make their escape were either cut down or made the slaves of their conquerors. ‘The Britons, whether Christian or pagan, were exterminated, made slaves of, or driven into two main districts,—the one on the west, extending from the Clyde to the Dee; the other on the south-west, comprising Cornwall, Devon, and part of Somerset. In these two districts, and among the mountains of Wales, whatever was left of the British Church was to be found.’

This was the condition of the country when Augustine and his monks came in 597. What remained of organized Christianity existed only in Wales. England was again pagan. When Augustine was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury he was invested by Pope Gregory with authority over what remained of the British Church as well as the newly formed English Church. All the British bishops were placed under his jurisdiction, that the unlearned might be taught, the feeble strengthened by persuasion, and the perverse corrected by authority. Augustine’s attempt to enforce his authority failed. The British bishops, who at his request attended two conferences, refused to recognise his jurisdiction, although his claims, it is said, were supported by his giving eyesight to a blind man; nor would they conform to the Roman order in the administration of baptism and the observance of Easter, which were the only points of difference between the British and Roman Churches which Augustine

thought it worth his while to raise in this controversy. It was not until nearly two centuries had elapsed that the whole of the Welsh Church had adopted the usages of the Roman Church, and the authority of the See of Rome was acknowledged. Gradually the Welsh Church came under the leavening influence of the English Church. From the beginning of the ninth century the Welsh bishops began to be consecrated by the Archbishops of Canterbury, one note of independence after another passed away, and ultimately the Church of the Britons was merged in that which recognised the pope as its head. It is very doubtful whether the Welsh people became strongly attached to the Romish Church. Their love of independence and their intensely national spirit would scarcely permit that, especially under the Norman kings, whose policy towards Wales seemed to be to stamp out the national character of the people; and the Church was employed as the instrument for giving effect to that policy. Alien bishops and clergy were appointed, who were not only ignorant of the language, but absolutely destitute of sympathy with the people. The consequence was, the people were driven away from the Church, and became utterly careless about religion.

CHAPTER II.

THE DAWN OF THE REFORMATION.

John Wickliffe—Walter Brute—Sir John Oldcastle—State of Religion—Owen Glyndwr—The Marian Persecution in Wales—Romish Superstitions—Dr. Meyrick—Church in Wales—Llandaff—St. David's—Bangor—St. Asaph—John Penry—Vicar Pritchard—Dr. Baily—Translation of Welsh Bible—Dr. Richard Davies—Salisbury—Dr. Morgan—Dr. David Rhys—Dr. Davies Mallwyd—Dr. Owen—Vicar Pritchard's Poetry.

JOHN WICKLIFFE had friends and supporters in the Principality in such men as Brute and Cobham and others. Walter Brute, a native of Olchon, on the borders of Herefordshire and Monmouthshire, graduated at Oxford in 1360, stoutly opposed the begging friars, and with great ability and courage defended the principles of Lollardy. Sir John Oldcastle, who afterwards became Lord Cobham, was Brute's friend and near neighbour, also a devoted supporter of Wickliffe's teaching. In all probability there were many others in the county of Monmouth who were in sympathy with this new movement. John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, the friend and patron of Wickliffe, had a favourite residence at Grosmont Castle, in close proximity to Oldcastle and Olchon. The fact that such influential supporters of Lollardy lived in the neighbourhood would be likely to encourage others among the people to support this new opposition to assumptions and practices of Rome. Piers Plowman speaks of the cruel persecution of Brute and Cobham, and of the Christian courage and fortitude with which they bore their sufferings.

The 'Morning Star' was for some time hidden behind a

cloud, and the persecution under Henry V. imposed a severe check upon these beginnings of the Reformation. Sometimes persecution helps to develop the latent powers of the Church, at other times it depresses and crushes the beginnings of newly awakened energy and zeal. It was so in the case of Lollardy; the movement was premature.

In consequence of the wars of Owen Glyndwr, which were continued for fifteen years, the country was reduced to a sad condition. The castles and towns were laid in ruins, and the country laid waste. The grass was allowed to grow in the market-place of Llanrwst, and the lawlessness of the times made life as well as property insecure. The educational and religious advantages of the people were very few. There were no books within reach of the common people, whilst the ministrations of the Church were for the most part conducted in an unknown tongue. A gross moral darkness settled upon the people. It was not without reason that the country was spoken of as ‘Wild Wales.’

To the noble army of martyrs during the Marian persecution Wales appears to have furnished three only, and they were Englishmen, viz.: Bishop Farrar, at Carmarthen; Rowlins White, a fisherman, at Cardiff; and William Nicol, a simple but pious man, at Haverfordwest. Dr. Rees says that in all probability, in addition to those who suffered martyrdom during Mary’s reign, ‘there were two or three from Wales amongst the exiles who fled to the Continent, and returned to their native country on the accession of Elizabeth.’ The Reformation only touched the outskirts of the Principality, which was due in some measure to the isolation of the country, in consequence of which great movements in London often exhausted themselves before they reached the people of ‘Wild Wales.’ Moreover, the Reformation had no prominent supporters in Wales to lead the people, and the persecution of Cobham had exerted a demoralizing influence

upon the life of the people, which remained until the time of the Reformation.

Romish ceremonies and superstitions were more widely practised now than at any other period of the nation's history perhaps. The people carried their beads with them to church, and used them in their prayers ; they crossed their breasts at the sight of the altar, and buried their dead with songs and lighted candles. The morality of the clergy was deplorably low. Concubinage, adultery, and incest were not only tolerated, but even practised by the priests. Dr. Meyrick, Bishop of Bangor, in the year 1560, found it necessary to institute the following inquiries respecting the clergy in his diocese :—Whether they had all preached in their cures ; whether every one possessed the New Testament in English and Latin ; how many chapters they had conned and laboured by heart ; how many were resident and kept houses ; how many were concubinaries, or were suspected of being such through receiving suspicious women into their houses, and how many were known to be notoriously married ; whether the parsons and vicars served their own cures, or kept curates to do their work. Dr. Meyrick complained that he had only two preachers in the whole of his diocese. A similar state of things existed in the other Welsh dioceses. In 1565, when the archbishop took steps to fill the vacant Sees of Llandaff and Bangor, he found great difficulty in securing men who were willing to accept the appointments. Llandaff had been void for two or three years, and was greatly impoverished. Bangor was sadly disorganized, there being no preaching in the diocese, and concubinage was openly practised. The archbishop was earnestly solicited to appoint such a commissioner there as kept openly only three concubines.

The diocese of St. Asaph was not in a much better condition. Dr. William Hughes, bishop of that diocese, was charged in the year 1587 with an abuse of episcopal

authority. He held sixteen rich livings, and only supplied them with three resident preachers.

John Penry, a native of Breconshire, after spending some years at Oxford, first as a student and then as a preacher, returned to the Principality. On his return he made inquiry respecting the condition of the Welsh Church, and published the result in two books, in which he says:—

‘This I dare affirm and stand to, that if a view of all the registries in Wales be taken, the name of that shire, that town, that parish cannot be found where for the space of six years together, within these twenty-nine years, a godly learned minister hath executed the duty of a faithful teacher, and approved his ministry in any mean sort. And what then should you tell me about Abbey-lubbers, who take no pains though they be able?

‘Miserable days! Into what times we are fallen that thieves and murderers of souls, the very patterns and patrons of all covetousness, proud and more than pope-like tyrants, the very defeaters of God’s truth, unlearned dolts, blind guides, unseasoned and unsavoury salt, drunkards, adulterers, foxes and wolves, mire and puddle; to be brief, the very swinesty of all uncleanness, and the very ignominy and reproach of the sacred ministry, who cannot be spoken against but this will straightway be made a matter against the State. And therefore, all the misery, all the ignorance, all the profaneness in life and conversation hath been for the most part by means of our bishops and blind guides; yet may not a man affirm so much with safety, lest he be said to be a mutinous and factious fellow, and one that troubleth the State.’

Nor does this testimony stand alone. The Rev. Rees Pritchard, Vicar of Llandovery, who wrote about forty years later, says that it would be difficult to decide whether the clergyman, the farmer, the labourer, the artisan, the bailiff, the judge, or the nobleman was the most daring in impiety.

The Bishop of Bangor, Dr. Lewis Baily, in the report of

his visitation of that diocese in 1623, says that in many of the churches not one service had been held for years, and in others no quarterly services were held, the clergymen being absent from their parishes, or drunken; marriages were not attended to, and the dead for many days were left unburied.

In 1563, an Act was passed authorizing the translation of the Bible into Welsh, the preamble of which states that 'Her Majesty's most loving and obedient subjects, inhabiting within Her Highness's dominion and country of Wales, being no small part of this realm, are utterly destitute of God's holy Word, and do remain in the like or worse darkness and ignorance than they were in the time of papistry.'

Dr. Richard Davies, Bishop of St. David's, in a letter prefixed to the first translation of the New Testament printed in the Welsh language in 1567, says:—

'By rapine and theft, perjury, deceit, falsehood, and arrogance, as with hooks, men of all sorts gather and draw to themselves. God will not drown the world again with the waters of a deluge; but lust for the things of this world has drowned Wales at this day, and has driven away everything good and virtuous. For what is office in Wales in the present age but a hook with which he who holds it draws to himself the fleece and the flesh of his neighbour? What are learning, knowledge, and skill in the law, but thorns in the sides of neighbours, to cause them to stand aloof? Often in Wales the hall of the gentleman is found to be the refuge of thieves. Therefore I say that were it not for the arms and wings of the gentry there would be but little left in Wales.'

For nearly a hundred years after the Reformation, excepting in cathedrals, churches, and chapels, there were no Bibles in Wales. The first book printed in the Welsh language was published in 1546, by Sir John Price of The Priory, Brecon, and contained a translation of the Psalms, the Gospels as appointed to be read in the churches, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Com-

mandments, a Calendar, and the Seven Virtues of the Church. Sir John was a layman, a sturdy Protestant, and a man of considerable influence and ability.

The following year Mr. W. Salisbury published a small dictionary in Welsh and English. Salisbury was a native of North Wales, born probably at Cae Du, Llansanan, in the county of Denbigh, who after passing through the schools in the neighbourhood, went to Oxford, and after finishing his course there, removed first to Thave's Inn, and then to Lincoln's Inn. He was a man of profound learning, a master of several languages, of great resources and high moral character.

Salisbury eventually gave up the law and returned to his native country. The four Welsh bishops with the Bishop of Hereford were commanded by the Crown to prepare and issue a Welsh version of the Scriptures, in accordance with the Act of 1563 already mentioned; but they did nothing in their corporate capacity. The Bishop of St. David's rendered Salisbury some assistance, who undertook the work and published a translation of the New Testament in 1567. Several other small and less important works also came from his pen. Dr. Morgan, Vicar of Llanrhaiadr-yn-Mochnant, and Dr. Parry, Bishop of St. Asaph, also rendered valuable service in the work of translating the Word of God into the vernacular. Dr. Morgan's translation was made from the original, and by his accurate and intelligible rendering of the Hebrew and Greek, he placed the Welsh people under a lasting debt of gratitude to him. When it became known that he was engaged in this work, many of his popish parishioners preferred charges against him, which necessitated his appearing first before his bishop and then before the Archbishop of Canterbury. Whitgift, finding in him an accomplished scholar and a master of the sacred languages, and also perceiving the envy which had prompted his persecutors, not only acquitted him, but encouraged and assisted

him in the great work he had undertaken. He was raised to the See of Llandaff in 1595, and translated to St. Asaph in 1601, where he died September 10, 1604. He was a ripe scholar, a diligent, conscientious, and exemplary parish clergyman, bishop, and gentleman. Dr. David Rhys, who published a Welsh grammar in 1592; the Rev. Thomas Huet, who assisted Salisbury in his translation of the New Testament; Dr. Williams of Trefriw; Dr. Davies of Mallwyd, the author of a Welsh and Latin dictionary; as well as Dr. Owen, Bishop of St. Asaph, who urged the clergy in his diocese to preach the gospel to the people in their native tongue, were good men and true, and by their work prepared the people for the revival of God's work in the Principality.

The Rev. Rees Pritchard, Vicar of Llandovery, Carmarthen, deserves more than a passing mention. He was the son of David ab Richard, a gentleman of considerable means; born at Llandovery, 1579; entered Jesus College, Oxford, in 1597; ordained at Witham, in Essex, by the suffragan bishop of Colchester in April 1602, and in the following August was promoted to the vicarage of Llandingad, in which parish his native town is situated. It is said that in his early years he was addicted to drink, and that one day, in a drunken frolic, he and his companions forced a goat to drink until it became intoxicated. The animal could never after that be induced to enter a public-house nor to taste intoxicating liquor. The goat's repugnance to the drink led the young clergyman to think of his ways, and ultimately he became converted. Pritchard was an able man, and soon became known as an earnest and very successful preacher of the gospel, attracting large crowds of people wherever he preached. He preached to the people with great effect in the open air as well as in the churches. How he managed to evade reading the 'Book of Sports' and to escape persecution is a great mystery. Perceiving that the people were passionately fond of poetry, the vicar turned the substance of his sermons and other

Scripture teaching into verse, which he printed and circulated among the people. His verses were committed to memory, recited and sung in farmhouses, in the fields and by the wayside. The poetry was not of a high order, but it was full of sound sense and gospel truth. It condemned the idle and thoughtless clergyman, unmasked the hypocrite, denounced the slanderer, and enforced righteousness and purity. It was a substantial and practical body of divinity. Many of the good vicar's verses have passed into national proverbs. Taking it all in all, his book, published two years after his death, and known as the *Canwyll y Cymry*, the Candle of Welshmen, did more to influence for good the Welsh mind than any other book ever published in the Welsh language, save the Bible. It has passed through many editions, and is widely circulated at the present time.

Pritchard continued to preach and teach and live the gospel within the pale of the Church up to the time of his death. His work contributed largely in preparing the way for Nonconformity; in fact, many of his followers became Nonconformists.

CHAPTER III.

NONCONFORMITY—ITS BEGINNING.

The ‘Book of Sports’—Archbishop Laud—Erbury—Walter Cradoc—William Wroth—Conversion—Ejection—Popularity—Founding Nonconformity in Wales—Cradoc’s Popularity—Baxter—Morgan Lloyd—Morgan Powell—Vavasour Powell—Prison—Popularity—Prison again—Merthyr Tydfil—The Baptists—Congregationalists—Revival of Religion—Churches Formed—Llanvaches—Llanbrynmair.

As we have seen, the moral condition of the Principality at the time of the Reformation, and for a long time after, was deplorably sad, and the English Church, although she had the whole field to herself, did next to nothing to enlighten the people or to elevate their morals; indeed, she discouraged and hindered what efforts were made, by persecuting earnest and zealous workers. The small band of godly clergymen, who strove to do their duty as true ministers of Christ, often found it difficult to remain within the Church, and preserve a good conscience. When the order was issued enjoining upon the clergy the duty of reading the ‘Book of Sports’ to their congregations, it was felt that matters had reached their climax, and a large number of conscientious men refused to comply with the iniquitous requirement.

Archbishop Laud instituted a systematic inquisition, persecuting such clergymen as refused to carry out the instructions which had been issued.

During twelve years of Laud’s administration, not fewer than four thousand Puritans emigrated to America, and about seventy-seven divines of the Church of England became

pastors of emigrant churches in the New World before the year 1640.

In Wales, as in England, there were faithful men, who felt that they must obey God rather than man, and who were reckoned amongst those who suffered for conscience' sake.

In two reports to the king, Laud stated that his lord of St. David's had lived within his diocese for several months, that he had suspended one lecturer for his nonconformity, and in the future would be careful in his ordination of men. His lordship of Llandaff had found William Erbury, the Vicar of St. Mary's, Cardiff, and his curate, Walter Cradoc, disobedient to His Majesty's injunctions. The disobedient vicar had been admonished, and the curate, who was a 'bold, ignorant young fellow,' had been suspended and deprived of his licence to serve the cure. A year later, Erbury and Wroth of Llanvaches were reported as being 'noted schismatics,' against whom articles had been preferred in the High Court of Commission, where, it is anticipated, they will receive according to their merits. The Bishop of St. David's had inhibited a Mr. Matthews, Vicar of Penwain, who had been preaching against the observance of 'holy days,' and two or three others who had been 'meddling with questions which His Majesty had forbidden.' In 1638, Mr. Erbury, refusing to submit, and being unable to satisfy his parishioners without wounding his conscience, resigned his living. Mr. Wroth was ejected. And so the formal breach in the Church in Wales was made.

In ejecting Wroth, Bishop Murray deprived the Church of the services of one of the best preachers and most exemplary and godly men that she could boast of in the Principality at that time. He belonged to one of the oldest and most respectable families in the county of Monmouth. He was born at or near Abergavenny in the year 1570, he matriculated in the sixteenth year of his age at Jesus College, Oxford, taking his B.A. degree in 1590. According to

Charles of Bala, he remained at Oxford for fourteen years. This, however, seems rather doubtful, as, in all probability, before 1600 he was presented with the living of Llanvaches by Sir E. Lewis of Van, near Caerphilly.

His conversion, as reported by the Rev. Joshua Thomas, was brought about in a very singular and solemn way. A relative, at whose house Wroth lodged, had an important lawsuit in London, which ended in his favour. When the trial was ended, he sent home the pleasing news, and requested certain of his neighbours and friends to be at his house on his arrival, to spend the evening with him in feasting and mirth. Wroth, who, it is said, was ‘addicted to levity and carnal mirth,’ and being very fond of music, bought a new violin for the occasion. The company assembled, and after anxiously waiting for some time for the arrival of their host, were all filled with horror by the arrival of a messenger bearing the painful intelligence that he had suddenly died on his way home. It is easier to imagine than to describe the feelings of the assembled guests. Wroth seems to have been specially terror-struck ; he flung away his violin, and falling on his knees in the midst of the company, he most earnestly poured out his heart to God in prayer for himself, for the family, and all present. From that time he was a changed man, and became a most faithful, devoted, and successful preacher of the gospel. His fame as a preacher spread throughout South Wales, and even across the English Border, and from the adjoining English counties, as well as from South Wales, the people flocked to Llanvaches to hear him ; the crowds sometimes being so great that it was necessary for him to preach in the churchyard, as the church would only hold a small proportion of the people. When his bishop angrily asked him how he dared to infringe the canons of the Church by his irregular proceedings, he replied : ‘There are thousands of immortal souls around me thronging to perdition, and should I not use all the means which are likely to succeed to

save them ?' The vicar's reply so affected the bishop that, it is said, he wept. When Bishop Murray deprived him of all authority to preach in the Church, feeling that he had a higher commission, which was given not by man but by God, and which man could not withdraw, not even a bishop, he continued to fulfil that higher commission outside the Church, earning for himself by his unceasing and successful labours the designation, 'The Apostle of Wales.' He was deprived of his living in 1638. In the following year he formed an independent church at Llanvaches, and so became the founder of Nonconformity in Wales. In the beginning of the year 1642, at an advanced age, Mr. Wroth finished his useful career, and, according to his own request, was buried under the threshold of the church of the parish where for more than forty years he had exercised his ministry.

William Erbury, one of Wroth's coadjutors, was born in the parish of Roath, Cardiff, in the year 1604, and educated at Brasenose College, Oxford, where he took his degree. He commenced his ministry at Newport, Monmouthshire, and afterwards became Vicar of St. Mary's, Cardiff. He was ejected in 1638 for refusing to read the 'Book of Sports.' He became an itinerant preacher, and subsequently a chaplain in the parliamentary army. He died in 1654. He was a scholarly man, of good parts and undoubted piety, but, unhappily, he became partially deranged some time before his death. Christopher Love, a native of Cardiff, was converted through Erbury's instrumentality, and became so devotedly attached to him that he would have readily parted with the half of what he possessed in the world for Erbury's relief. He befriended him with all the devotion of a son in the gospel when Erbury stood in need of protection and help.

'The bold and ignorant young fellow,' Walter Cradoc, was born at Trevela, Llangwmwcha, near Usk, Monmouthshire, and was probably educated at Oxford. His first curacy

was Peterstone-super-Ely, and subsequently he became curate of St. Mary's, Cardiff. After his ejection by the Bishop of Llandaff, he became curate of Wrexham, where his earnest and powerful preaching was attended with extraordinary power and success. The people were often melted to tears as he read and expounded God's word. So popular did he become as a preacher, that whenever the bell was tolled for service—though it were as early as six o'clock in the morning—the people would flock together from town and country, and crowd the church. The effect of his ministry upon the neighbourhood was marvellous. Among his converts were Morgan Lloyd and David ab Hugh, who became famous preachers. A certain maltster, named Timothy Middleton, finding that he sold less malt than usual, made inquiries as to the cause of this falling-off in his business, and was told that it was because a Walter Cradoc, from South Wales, had changed the people by his preaching. The maltster became greatly enraged, and by the help of some influential people soon succeeded in driving Cradoc away. He had already made a deep and lasting impression, however, by his ministry, which prepared the way for Nonconformity in that district. At Shrewsbury, whither he went, he became acquainted with Richard Baxter. From Shrewsbury he went to Llanfair, Waterdine, on the borders of Hereford and Radnor, where he was kindly received and hospitably entertained by Sir Robert Harley, a true friend and supporter of persecuted Puritans. It is supposed that Cradoc remained here three or four years, making excursions into the neighbouring counties of Brecon, Radnor, Montgomery, and Cardigan, preaching the gospel wherever he found an opening.

In Cardiganshire his ministry was made eminently successful. A gentleman named Morgan Powell made Cradoc the butt of his ridicule when he came first into the neighbourhood to preach, caricatured him in verse, which he published, and in other ways opposed the preacher's work. On one

occasion Powell arranged a football game in a field adjoining the spot where Cradoc was holding a service. In an effort to kick the ball against the preacher, Powell fell and sprained his ankle, and so was compelled to hear the sermon, which, under the divine blessing, was made instrumental in his conversion. After this Powell's house became the preacher's home, whenever he went to the county to preach. He not only extended his hospitality to God's servants, but he became a preacher himself, and was successful in establishing a church in the place where he resided. In 1639 Cradoc assisted Wroth in organizing the Congregational Church at Llanvaches, of which he afterwards became the chief pastor. During the Civil War, with many of the members of his church, he removed to Bristol, which was at the time in the possession of the Parliamentarians; afterwards he proceeded to London, where he became the stated preacher at All-Hallows the Great. In 1646 he returned to Wales, occasionally visiting the Metropolis. He died at Trevela, on December 24, 1659, and was buried in the chancel of the church at Llangwmuwcha. Cradoc was the principal instrument in the establishment of Nonconformity in Wales. He was a man of great natural ability, possessing a wonderful faculty for simplifying the gospel so as to make it plain to the humblest of his hearers, and for driving it home to the conscience and heart. When Baxter first knew him he thought very highly of him, but in later years he accused him of 'gross Antinomianism.' Dr. Rees admits that he cherished somewhat hyper-Calvinistic sentiments, which he sometimes incautiously expressed, but contends that he was as far from being an Antinomian as Richard Baxter himself. Cradoc was called twice to preach before Parliament, and was appointed a member of the committee—commonly called *tryers*—for the examination and approval of public preachers.

Vavasour Powell was another prominent member of this band of early Nonconformists. He was born at Knucklas,

near Knighton, in 1617; and after passing through Jesus College, Oxford, kept a school at Clun, in Shropshire, where his uncle, Erasmus Powell, was then incumbent. It is not known that he ever took orders in the Church, although he dressed in clerical attire, and assisted in the Church service. He was a vain, thoughtless youth, and until he was more than twenty years of age an utter stranger to religion. One Sabbath, as he stood watching with evident interest some games in which a number of the people were engaged, a good Puritan, who happened to pass that way, said to him, ‘Doth it become you, sir, that are a scholar, and one that teacheth others, to break the Lord’s day thus?’ ‘Wherein do I break it?’ asked Powell. ‘You see me only stand by; I do not play at all.’ ‘But,’ urged the Puritan, ‘you find your pleasure herein by looking on, and this God forbids in His holy Word;’ and then he read from Isaiah lviii. 1–3, ‘Not finding thy own pleasure upon the Sabbath day.’ The words went to his heart, and he resolved never to transgress God’s law in that way again. A sermon by some ‘excellent old preacher,’ whose name is not known, deepened the impression that had been made; and some time after, under the preaching of Walter Cradoc, he was led to consecrate himself to God. He became one of the most devoted and faithful of a distinguished group of great and good men. He soon began to preach, attracting much attention by his ministry. He was also called to share in the afflictions of the gospel, being persecuted and imprisoned for Christ’s sake; in suffering, as well as by his public ministry, testifying of the grace of God to the blessing of many. It is said that a constable who was charged with his custody in Radnorshire, took him to his own house, and was so impressed with the fervour of his prayers for his family, that he ran away because he would not be associated with the prosecution of so good a man. Powell was determined that the constable should not suffer on his account, so he bound himself with

two sufficient sureties to appear at the next Radnorshire Assizes. At the Assizes he was honourably acquitted, and to the great chagrin of his persecutors was invited to dine with the judge. After suffering much persecution, he removed to London, where he spent two years; and then removed to Dartford, in Kent, where for two years and a half he laboured with great success. It is very difficult to form a conception of the extent of his toil after he returned to the Principality in 1646. Like John Wesley, he preached two or three times a day, itinerating from place to place, preaching at fairs and markets, in the fields and on mountain tops, wherever, in fact, he could find a people to preach to; and very many under his preaching were brought to a knowledge of the truth.

His usefulness and popularity as a preacher marked him out as one of the first of the Welsh Nonconformists to suffer persecution at the Restoration, and he was very soon arrested and imprisoned. On the 28th of April 1660, a company of soldiers entered his house and dragged him to the prison at Welshpool; from thence he was taken to Shrewsbury, where he was kept for nine months. After a brief freedom he was again imprisoned at Montgomery for several months, and from thence removed to the Fleet Prison, London, where he was confined in a small, unhealthy room. This imprisonment so affected his health that he never afterwards recovered from the consequences. From the Fleet he was removed to Southsea Castle, where he was confined for above five years. In 1667 he regained his freedom once more, but only for a short time, for in less than ten months he was again imprisoned. During this interval he visited Bath and Bristol for the benefit of his health. On his way home he preached to large congregations at Newport and elsewhere, getting as far as Merthyr Tydfil, where he preached to nearly a thousand people in the churchyard. George Jones, the incumbent of the parish,—a most reprobate character,—swore that Powell

was accompanied by a large number of armed men, and the next morning he was apprehended by a major of the county militia, and conveyed to Cardiff. After submitting to several mock trials in that town, and also in Cowbridge, he was committed to the county prison. This was in October 1668. In May of the following year, through the influence of a friend, he appeared to answer the charge brought against him in the Court of Common Pleas. He was sent to the Fleet Street Prison, although the charges against him were not proven, where he lingered until October 27, 1670, when he was released by death. He was buried in Bunhill Fields, in the presence of a vast multitude of Nonconformists, who followed him to his grave.

Of this group of religious reformers in Wales, Powell led the most eventful life and suffered the greatest persecution. He was imprisoned not fewer than thirteen times, the last eleven years of his life being almost entirely spent in prison. His enemies used both tongue and pen to villify his character, but in spite of all their malicious attacks his good name still lives, and his memory is most precious to unprejudiced Welshmen.

Before his death Powell and several of his followers became Baptists. At first the question of baptism was not made prominent in connection with the Revival in the Principality; all who were identified with the movement were known by the general designation ‘Nonconformists’; but after a while it became so important to some that they were led to form themselves into a separate church at Ilston, near Swansea. By some this is claimed as the first Baptist church established in the Principality. Others claim the priority for the church at Olchon, which, they say, was formed as early as 1633, five years before Wroth was ejected from his living. If this be correct, Olchon is not only the oldest Baptist, but also the oldest Noncomformist church in Wales; and it would also indicate that the great religious awakening in the Principality

was quite independent of the Congregationalist Revival which commenced at Llanvaches.

The incessant and devoted labours of such a band of pious, learned, and able men as those whose names we have given, could not fail to make a deep and lasting impression upon the Welsh people. As these men were removed from their places, other earnest and faithful toilers carried on the work, and many strong churches were established. In 1662 a large number of clergymen were ejected from their livings in various parts of the Principality, and these became active workers in connection with the Nonconformist revival. The movement so spread that within a quarter of a century from its commencement there was but one county — namely, Anglesea—in which there were no Nonconformists found. Many of the churches which were then formed have continued until to-day, and are still important centres of vigorous and robust Christian life. Blaenau Gwent, Llanwrtyd, Henllan, Trelleck, Llanedy, Felinfoel, and Llanbrynmair might be cited as examples of such churches. In 1715 there were 110 distinct congregations. It has been computed that 50,000, or about one-eighth of the entire population, were at that time Nonconformists. Possibly this calculation is somewhat exaggerated. According to Dr. Rees, the total membership of the Calvinistic Methodists and Congregationalists in Cardiganshire—as returned for 1881—amounted to 23,707, with 35,782 belonging to the Sunday schools and 42,795 hearers. But these figures are not correct, because the entire population of the county in that year was only 70,270 ; and the Baptist, Wesleyan, and Episcopal Churches are not included by Dr. Rees in the statistics which he gives. Still, after making all necessary deductions from these over-estimated results, it must be acknowledged that the revival, of which Wroth was one of the chief instruments, was, under God, the greatest work of grace with which the Welsh people had ever been blessed up to that time, and whose results will continue as long as the nation exists.

CHAPTER IV.

ORIGIN OF METHODISM IN WALES.

Griffith Jones, Llanddowror—Formation of Schools—Madam Bevan—Howell Harris—His Conversion—Holding Meetings—Rowlands, Llangeitho—Philip Pugh—Rowlands' Preaching—Howell Davies—Jones, Llangan—Peter Williams—Great Meetings at Llangeitho—Calvinistic Methodist Association in Wales—Countess of Huntington at Trevecca—Calvinistic Controversy.

THE revival which had its centre at Llanvaches did not spread in its beneficial influence and effects as might have been expected. Although two or three hundred ministers had been engaged in the work, and religious books had been circulated, a lamentable amount of ignorance, irreligion, and superstition still prevailed in various parts of the Principality when the Methodist revival began about a hundred years later. The probability is that, after the first group of evangelists had passed away, both ministers and people confined their religious work to their own immediate localities, and consequently the churches became independent of each other, and less likely to spread the work of God beyond the range of their own neighbourhood. They succeeded in cultivating small barren tracts into fertile gardens, but these small tracts were only so many oases in the desert. The greater part of the country still remained a moral wilderness.

The Rev. Griffith Jones, Vicar of Llanddowror, says:—

'The growing profaneness and open debauchery, the professed and practised infidelity, with the natural offspring of all this, the vices and immoralities of the time we live in, are so daring

and barefaced as publicly to triumph in our streets, and bid defiance to the laws of God and man ; the infectious fumes of pernicious errors and deadly works of darkness, which have too much eclipsed the gospel light already, and threaten the total extinction of it in our land,—these dreadful calamities, I say, should awaken all the serious friends of religion to bestir themselves and exert their zeal for the preservation and revival of it before it quite forsake us, or is taken away in judgment from us.'

Griffith Jones has been sometimes called the 'Morning Star' of the Methodist revival in the Principality. He was regarded as the greatest preacher of his day in Wales, and very justly so. Wherever he went preaching the gospel, vast crowds would assemble to hear him. He contrived to make his preaching excursions at Easter and Whitsuntide, in order to counteract as far as possible the baneful influence of the wakes and 'Vanity Fairs,' and not unfrequently he succeeded in accomplishing very great good by so doing. His circulating schools produced the most interesting and beneficial results. During the twenty-four years of their existence, 150,212 persons of different ages, from six years to above seventy, were taught to read the Welsh Bible. At his death he left £7000 in the hands of his friend Madam Bevan, who also added thereto the residue of her own estate, to continue the work of further instructing the Welsh people in Christian knowledge.

By his zealous and devoted labours Jones secured for himself the displeasure of the bishops and clergy, who gave vent to their opposition by laying such absurd charges against him as that his parents were Nonconformists, that he had been brought up to the trade of a turner, that he had distributed 24,000 copies of Matthew Henry's Commentary, that he agreed with the Nonconformists in holding that the people have a right to choose their own minister, that he had studied Hebrew under a Presbyterian, that his communicants

were Dissenters, that he had corresponded with the Methodists, had gone to great expense in putting down wakes, sports, etc. etc. Such accusations cast a painful reflection upon the moral condition of the men who made them, and Mr. Jones could well afford to ignore them.

Griffith Jones died on April 8, 1761, at the house of his friend, Madam Bevan, at Laugharne, aged seventy-seven years. He was a great preacher, the first apostle of Welsh education, and a most devoted servant of Christ. His work will long live in Wales.

Howell Harris, the founder of Calvinistic Methodism, was born at Trevecca, Talgarth, in the county of Brecon, January 23, 1714. Being destined for the ministry in the Church of England, he was kept at school until he was eighteen years of age.

On Easter Sunday, March 30, 1735, the officiating clergyman at Talgarth Church, seeing that the people neglected the Lord's Table, read to them the appointed exhortation. 'You plead your unfitness,' said the earnest minister, as he enlarged on the form before him. 'Let me tell you that if you are not fit to come to the Lord's Supper, you are not fit to come to church, you are not fit to live, you are not fit to die.' Howell Harris, who was present, was greatly affected by these earnest words; on his way home he made peace with one with whom he was at variance, and during the following week made an earnest endeavour to live a better life. The next Sunday found him again at church, satisfied with the life he had lived during the week, and fully convinced that he was a good man. But while kneeling at the altar and joining in the general confession—'We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness which we from time to time most grievously have committed by thought, word, and deed against Thy Divine Majesty, provoking most justly Thy wrath and condemnation against us. We do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our mis-

doings. The remembrance of them is grievous unto us,'—it suddenly occurred to him that he was uttering what was false in the very presence of God. It was not true that the remembrance of his sins was grievous unto him. He was not conscious of the burden or guilt of sin. A sudden terror seized him. At first he thought he would turn away, but on further consideration he resolved to amend his ways, and he partook of the Lord's Supper. For some time he endured an earnest conflict, endeavouring in vain to find peace. The reading of a book on the Commandments by Bryan deepened his conviction of sin. He was led to flee from the 'wrath to come,' and renouncing all efforts to establish a righteousness of his own, he cast himself upon Christ, and was saved through faith in Him.

His friends sent him to Oxford in order to cure him of his fanaticism, but no prospect of worldly advancement, or any other inducement, could rob him of the pleasure which he found in private prayer and the means of grace. On his return to Trevecca he opened a day-school, and availed himself of every opportunity to urge his fellow-countrymen to yield themselves to the claims of Christ. At that time a man used to go about from village to village conducting psalmody classes, whom Harris used to accompany that he might talk to the young people, who came together to be taught singing, about the salvation of their souls. He attended family gatherings that he might use his influence among them for good, and as the result family religion was established in many homes. A revival of God's work broke out which, though small and feeble at the beginning, continued to spread and grow, until village after village and town after town caught the flame, and many were saved.

In the adjoining county of Cardigan, about forty miles to the north-west of Trevecca, in the little village of Llangeitho, another gracious work had commenced, and was spreading under the preaching of Daniel Rowlands, a young man of

twenty-two, who held the curacy under his brother. Rowlands was the son of the former Vicar of Llangeitho, who, in consideration of his superior scholarship, was admitted into holy orders a year before the usual age. He was an excellent reader. He also excelled in athletic sports, in which he often indulged on the Sabbath afternoon, finding more pleasure therein than in the discharge of his ministerial functions.

The Rev. Philip Pugh of Llwynypiod, near to Llangeitho, had the reputation of being a very attractive and powerful preacher, and Rowlands, seized with an ambition to excel his Nonconformist rival, began in his preaching ‘to thunder,’ as he called it, selecting for his sermons such texts as—‘These shall go away into everlasting punishment,’ ‘The great day of His wrath is come,’ etc. His preaching soon attracted attention, the church became crowded, and his hearers often stood terror-stricken with the consciousness of guilt, and the fear of death and the judgment to come, as they listened to his graphic descriptions of hell and the loss of the soul. All this time Rowlands was not converted, as he himself afterwards admitted to Philip Pugh. Pugh advised him to ‘preach the gospel to the people,’ and ‘apply the balm to their wounds.’ ‘I am afraid,’ replied the young curate, ‘that I myself have not found that faith in all its fulness.’ ‘Preach it then till you find it, for if you go on in this way preaching the law you will soon destroy half the people in the land,’ replied the venerable minister of Llwynypiod.

The conversion of Rowlands took place about the year 1735, under a sermon by Griffith Jones of Llanddowror, preached at Llanddewi-Brefi, a few miles from Llangeitho. The change soon became apparent in his preaching, which was attended with marvellous results.

‘After preaching Sinai’s thunder for a period without stay,’ says Williams of Pantycelyn, in an elegy on his death, ‘there came a beautiful calm, a melting power, remarkable for its sweetness, which calmed the troubled breast. The deep

groans, the great distress, gave place to ecstatic joy and shouts of praise. The sighs and scenes of horror gave place to shouts of Glory! Hallelujah! Thank God! (Diolch iddo, Gogoniaut, Bendigedig').

One Sabbath morning, whilst reading the words of the Litany: ‘By Thy agony and bloody sweat, by Thy cross and passion, by Thy precious death and burial, by Thy glorious resurrection and ascension, and by the coming of the Holy Ghost,’ the preacher was filled with an overwhelming power. The marvellous, subduing grace rested upon the whole congregation, melting the people’s hearts, whilst, amid the agony and tears of broken-hearted penitents arose the response, ‘Good Lord, deliver us.’ That is one among many illustrations which might be given of the mighty power which attended the ministry of Rowlands after the change had been wrought in his own life.

Another of Griffith Jones’s converts was Howell Davies of Pembrokeshire. Jones was so interested in Davies that he invited his congregation to unite in special prayer on his behalf on the day of his ordination, which invitation the people very heartily accepted. Davies, like Harris and Rowlands, had to encounter much difficulty and opposition, but, like them, he pursued his work with unflinching courage and resolution, preaching the gospel ‘in season and out of season,’ and his labours were abundantly owned of God and blessed. In the county of Pembroke he had more than two thousand communicants. Harris, Rowlands, and Davies were the three men who were honoured by God in promoting the great Calvinistic Methodist revival in Wales. They soon found a very valuable co-worker in William Williams of Pantycelyn, the Hymnologist of the movement, who was converted under the preaching of Howell Harris. Peter Williams; Jones of Llangan, a very eloquent preacher; Charles of Bala, Simon Lloyd, Ebenezer Morris, Ebenezer Richard, and others, also co-operated in the great work.

Williams of Pantycelyn was very successful in conducting Society meetings, which were established at a very early period in connection with the revival, which very often were seasons of overwhelming power and grace, and which contributed very largely towards the establishment of Calvinistic Methodism in Wales.

Trevecca, Llangeitho, and Llysyfran, in Pembrokeshire, were at this time the three centres of attraction in the Principality ; the greatest of these was Llangeitho. Howell Harris was a veritable Boanerges. He possessed a commanding presence, a powerful voice, a strong will, and a dauntless courage. He would very often continue his preaching whilst dragged about by a raging mob. He never formally prepared his sermons. He abstained from such preparation, believing that when he had to speak it would be given him what to say to the people ; and so preaching in the consciousness of the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Ghost, his words came with great power.

Rowlands, on the contrary, who was the greater preacher of the two, carefully prepared his discourses, and delivered them with a passionate and pathetic eloquence and red-hot earnestness. He was more stationary than Harris, and from time to time people flocked from North and South Wales to hear him preach. From Bala, Carnarvon, Aberdovey, and Towyn, from Carmarthen, Llandilo, Swansea, and the Vale of Glamorgan, the people journeyed together in small pilgrim bands, like the tribes of Israel as they went up to Jerusalem. Resting by the wayside in order to eat their food and obtain refreshment for the journey, they would also join in prayer and praise, and by mutual conversation excite one another's expectation of the great blessings in store for them when they reached Llangeitho. Thus they travelled on from strength to strength until all at length appeared with the great congregation at the Sabbath morning's service. Reaching Llangeitho with hearts all aglow with sacred love,

filled with enthusiastic longing and expectation, they were prepared for the service. The flames of pure desire and holy joy would soon begin to rise from the altars of many hearts, and, ‘lost in wonder, love, and praise,’ they would unite in the worship and service of God, and then return to their homes with glowing hearts and enlarged experiences of divine grace, to tell their neighbours what the Lord had done for their souls. Thus the work would spread from village to village and from town to town.

The first of the Annual Associations of the Calvinistic Methodists was held at Watford, near Caerphilly, Glamorganshire, January 5 and 6, 1742. Whitefield was chosen the General Moderator, Howell Harris being appointed to take Whitefield’s place in his absence. For several years Whitefield attended these annual assemblies until he went out the third time to Georgia.

The Countess of Huntingdon often visited Trevecca, where she ultimately established a college for the training of young men for the work of the ministry. On the occasion of the opening of the college, the two sections of the Methodists in Wales,—the one represented by Howell Harris, and the other represented by Rowlands,—between which there had been an unfortunate controversy for some years, were united.

Whitefield was present and preached on Lady Huntingdon’s birthday. Rowlands of Llangeitho, Howell Harris, Williams of Pantycelyn, Howell Davies, Peter Williams of Carmarthen, Lady Huntingdon, and John Wesley were present and took part in the opening services. The Sainted Fletcher of Madeley was chosen president, and upon the recommendation of Wesley and Fletcher, the Rev. Joseph Benson was appointed the headmaster of the college.

In the year 1770, the great Calvinistic controversy began. Benson was dismissed from Trevecca in consequence of the part he took in relation to the celebrated Minutes of the Wesleyan Conference of that year. His dismissal was

followed by the resignation of Mr. Fletcher as president. From that time Wesley and his followers became entirely severed from the Calvinistic Methodists.

A long and painful controversy ensued, in which the brothers Richard and Rowland Hill, Toplady, and John Berridge entered the arena on the Calvinistic side, John and Charles Wesley and Fletcher on the opposite side.

This controversy affected Wales only in a very small degree, as the Welsh Methodists for the most part ranged themselves on the side of Calvinism. Consequently, the strength of the Methodist revival in Wales for over thirty years was exercised in favour of Calvinistic Methodism.

CHAPTER V.

JOHN WESLEY—HIS GREAT WORK.

John Wesley raised up by Providence—Great Principle—His Fidelity to it—Shut out of the Church—Bishop of Gloucester—Bristol Chapel—The Growth of the Work.

'HE whom Providence makes a wonder must become a study. John Wesley is therefore increasingly an object of attention; and thoughtful men desire to know the springs of his power. Great works ever reflect back upon their authors the interest they have themselves excited; and thus, as men encounter the results of Wesley's labours in every nook of England, or every shore of our Colonies, and in every State of America, they naturally turn back to the man, and inquire into his mental and moral characteristics.

'That those who are called his own followers should study him is only natural; but as time widens the range over which his memory spreads, and dissipates many misconceptions through which it was formerly seen, it is equally natural that from the Catholic Church, and from the philosophic world, eyes should search for the true character of this universal agent in the new forms and combinations which Christianity has exhibited in our day.'

Thus wrote William Arthur some years ago.

A hundred years have passed away since Wesley, with the words, 'I'll praise—I'll praise,' on his lips, and a last 'Farewell,' passed from the company of his sorrowing friends on earth, to join the larger company of those who waited to welcome him on the other shore, and to be 'for ever with

the Lord.' During the century both the man and his work have been studied with interest by many minds from many points of view. In the regard of his followers Wesley's is the loftiest figure of the century in which he lived, his greatness raising him to the commanding position among even his great and noble compeers.

‘Greatest, yet with least pretence,
Foremost-hearted of his time :
And as the greatest only are
In his simplicity sublime.’

Others also, beyond all suspicion of prejudice in his favour,—Churchmen and Dissenters, the poet, the philosopher, the historian,—have studied his life, have analysed his character, and have estimated the value of his influence and work ; and in doing so have paid their tribute to the greatness of his genius, the loftiness of his aim, the nobleness of his character, the widespread influence and beneficent results of his work. Nor is this widespread interest in Wesley to be wondered at, seeing how greatly and in how many ways the history of this country, and other countries as well, and also the various Churches of the land, were affected by the great revival with which his name stands so prominently associated. Through the instrumentality of Methodism the dolorous life of England in the eighteenth century was turned into new channels, and the country was saved from the awful scourge of such a revolution as swept over unhappy France and deluged it with blood. If England had not been spared that disaster, who knows what its history in the nineteenth century would have been.

Wesley is better understood to-day than he was a hundred years ago ; he will be yet more justly appreciated in the years to come ; so that, notwithstanding the many biographies that have already appeared, his Life has yet to be written.

The great principle which governed his life is clearly indicated in a letter to his father in which he writes :—

‘I do not say that the glory of God is to be my first or my principal consideration, but my only one ; since all considerations that are not implied in this are absolutely of no weight ; in the presence of this they all vanish away, they are less than the small dust of the balance. And indeed till all other considerations were set aside, I could never come to a clear determination ; till my eye was single my whole body was full of darkness. Every consideration distinct from this threw a shadow over all the objects I had in view, and was such a cloud as no light could penetrate ; whereas, so long as I kept my eye single, and steadily fixed on the glory of God, I have no more doubt of the way wherein I should go, than of the shining of the sun at noonday.’

Such was the loftiness of his aim and the purity of his motive. He submitted himself wholly to God. His life was placed under the government of the principle of supreme allegiance to God’s will. Consequently, his way was made plain before him, insight into the needs of his time and the best methods of work was given, and also the courage and stedfastness to act upon the convictions which were formed. He treated the traditions of his fathers, and the established customs and usages of society, with intelligent and conservative respect ; but whenever he found that they were not in perfect harmony with what he understood to be the Divine Will, he did not hesitate to do his duty, even though it might involve the loss of friends, ‘of father and mother, brothers and sisters, houses and land.’ He felt that he must ever look up to ‘Him that sitteth upon the throne’—

‘True as the needle to the pole, as the dial to the sun.’

When the Bishop of Bristol told Wesley that he had no business to preach in his diocese, as he had not been commissioned to do so, Wesley replied : ‘My Lord, my business on earth is to do what good I can. Wherever, therefore, I think I can do most good, there must I stay as long as I

think so. At present, I think I can do most good here: therefore, here I stay. Being ordained a priest, by the commission I then received I am a priest of the Church universal; and being ordained as a fellow of a college, I was not limited to any particular cure, but have an indeterminate commission to preach the Word of God in any part of the Church of England. I conceive not, therefore, that in preaching here by this commission I break any human law. When I am convinced I do, then it will be time to ask—Shall I obey God or man? But if I should be convinced in the meanwhile that I could advance the glory of God and the salvation of souls in any other place more than Bristol, in that hour by God's help I will go hence, which till then I may not do.' This shows us how intense was his conviction that the only way in which he could glorify God was by doing all the good he could, and how earnest and resolute was his purpose to make that the great business of his life, whatever might be the consequence. Wesley was conscious of the irregularity of his methods, but sufficient justification of such a course was found in the needs of the country. He would have rejoiced if the clergy had co-operated with him in his war against the vice and immorality of the age, and in seeking to save lost men and women. If they had contented themselves with shepherding the wandering sheep which he sought and brought back to the fold, or if they had simply refrained from opposing him in his work, he would have been thankful. But whether they helped or hindered, whether it was regular or irregular, whether in harmony with ecclesiastical authority or not, the work of awakening and saving men must be done at all hazards.

At an early date Wesley was obliged to consider the future of Methodism as it stood related to the Church of England. In the Conference of 1744 the question was asked, 'Do you not entail a schism on the Church? that is, is it not probable that your hearers after your death will be

scattered into all sects and parties, or that they will form themselves into a distinct sect?' To which the following answers were given:—' 1. We are persuaded that the body of our hearers will even after our death remain in the Church, unless they be thrust out. 2. We believe, notwithstanding, either that they will be thrust out, or that they will leaven the whole Church. 3. We do, and will do, all we can to prevent these consequences which are supposed likely to happen after our death. 4. But we cannot with good conscience neglect the present opportunity of saving souls while we live, for fear of consequences which may possibly happen after we are dead.' Wesley never intended to form a new sect by the establishment of a rival organization to the Church of England. He never intended to sever his connection therewith. With all the fondness which a child cherishes for his mother, Wesley clung to the Church in which he had been cradled, and in connection with which he had received his authority to preach the gospel. If, however, he and his followers were thrust out of the Church they would still carry on their work, which had been so manifestly stamped with God's sanction and authority, without any misgivings as to their future. Perhaps it would have been more consistent on Wesley's part, and better for his people in after years, if he had formally severed his connection with the Church. But it is 'hard when love and duty clash,' and Wesley's persistent attachment to the National Church must not be judged severely, although it did place his followers in an invidious position.

Wesley loved the parish temples of England, and particularly that of Epworth, with its old grey tower and rustic interior, in which he had worshipped when a boy, and from whose pulpit he had heard his father preach. But as he was treated elsewhere so was he treated here. He was forced into a position similar to that which in after-life he habitually assumed. The Epworth people naturally desired to hear

their old rector's son preach, but permission to preach in the church was refused. Notice was given by one John Taylor at the church door that Mr. Wesley would preach in the open air at six o'clock. When the time came the church-yard was filled with a great company of people from the neighbourhood; and Wesley, standing on his father's tomb-stone, preached from the words 'The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' For eight successive evenings the people from the town and the adjacent villages gathered about the familiar mounds and gravestones whilst their old rector's son preached to them. The preaching was attended with amazing power; men and women wept aloud, several dropped down as dead. Wesley's voice was drowned by the cries of the penitents, and many there and then found peace with God, and broke into loud thanksgiving. 'That week's work,' says Dr. Stoughton, 'will live in the history of the Church of England as long as the world lasts.'

Though shut out from the churches, maligned and persecuted by the bishops and clergy and those whom they instigated, Wesley pursued with unswerving fidelity the work which he felt God had called him to do. He was villified and slandered by those whose education and profession should have taught them better things. He was accused of being a 'pope,' a 'Jesuit'; of being 'in league with France,' and 'in the pay of Spain.' Every form of opposition was employed against him. In Staffordshire, Lancashire, and other parts of the country he had to encounter the rage of cursing, blaspheming, drunken mobs, having to submit to personal violence, and sometimes being in peril of his life. Milldams were let out, church bells were jangled, drunken fiddlers and ballad singers were hired in order to break up his services in the open air. In doing his work he had to endure much hardship and privation, very often meeting with hard fare and little food. For three weeks he and his companion had to

sleep every night on the floor—Wesley having a greatcoat for his pillow, and his companion Burkitt's *Notes on the New Testament*, being thankful that the skin had been rubbed off one side only by the hard bed on which he had lain. In the midst of all these things ‘his faith in God sustained him, and with a courage which might shame many of the world's chartered heroes, he flinched not from his duty and work.’ Wesley's first chapel was built in Bristol in 1739. The second chapel was built the same year in the Moorfields, London, and was known as the Foundry.

Lay preaching was also sanctioned, and Thomas Maxfield, whom Mrs. Susannah Wesley considered as surely called of God to preach the gospel as her son John was, and others engaged in secular business, were authorized to read and expound the Scriptures without any exercise of clerical functions. Class Meetings were also established, in which small companies of Christian people, and of such as had a desire to flee from the wrath to come, met under the care of a leader, to encourage and help each other in the life divine.

The increasing growth of the work soon rendered it necessary that Wesley and his coadjutors should meet in ‘Conference.’ In 1744 at his invitation several clergymen and others met him in London, to advise with him as to the best mode of carrying on the work of God. This first Conference was held in the Foundry, London; and among those who took part in its deliberations was John Hodges, rector of Wenvoe, a friend and co-worker with the Wesleys in Wales. The doctrines to be preached and the discipline to be maintained in connection with the Societies were discussed and determined. The Rules of the United Societies, and of the ‘Bands’ were submitted and approved. ‘The Annual Conference of the people called Methodists’ became at length an important institution, which has so grown in influence and power that it is now one of the most important ecclesiastical assemblies in the world.

Then the country was mapped out into Circuits for the better consolidation of the work, each division being placed under the care of the ‘assistants,’ or, to adopt the modern designation, the ‘superintendent.’ Chapel Trusts were formed and trustees appointed, and as the need arose other church offices were created, and officers appointed to fill them. A book-room and other institutions were established. A collection of hymns was prepared, and the ‘people called Methodists’ gradually developed under the direction of Providence into a completely organized and powerful church. ‘It was no mere machine, but a living organism, that was brought into existence.’

Charles Wesley was the hymn-writer of the movement, although, as his brother says in his brief obituary notice, ‘his least praise was his talent for poetry.’ He was the first of the two brothers to join the ‘Holy Club,’ and to receive the name of ‘Methodist,’ as he was also the first to enter into the enjoyment of conscious salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. He lacked John’s organizing genius, and in some other respects was his brother’s inferior. He was a good linguist, Horace and Virgil being his most familiar classics. He was able to quote the *Aeneid* from memory with great effect, as, for example, when by doing so he subdued the rage of his brother’s termagant wife, when she had shut the two brothers in a room, and secured their release. He had an eloquent tongue, more eloquent, it is said, than his brother’s; a critical knowledge of the Scriptures, and a heart that yearned with great tenderness over sinners. Rigid Churchman as he was up to the end of his life, he was inconsistent enough to preach during church hours, and he was also the first to administer the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper in a Methodist place of worship. He defended lay preaching when bishops impugned it. He was his brother’s earnest and able fellow-helper in propagating the great revival of evangelical Christianity.

But he will be longest remembered through his unrivalled hymns.

'With all their imperfections they are unrivalled. There are hymns of smoother versification, and pervaded by a serener spirit, more suited to Anglo-Catholics, and perhaps to sedate Nonconformists; but for light and life, force and fire, no compositions can compare with those of the Methodist poets. They bear distinctly a character of their own, and reflect the excitement out of which they arose. Perhaps at times Isaac Watts may have surpassed them in calm grandeur of conception, and Philip Doddridge in tenderness of sentiment; but beyond anything in either, there are in Charles Wesley's hymns tones of conflict and victory which resemble the voice of a trumpet, and strains of praise like the sound of many waters.'

The hymns of Methodism are an invaluable aid in the culture of the devout life. They touch the secret depths of the human heart, into which they carry light, conviction, and comfort. They have shaped the language and intensified the earnestness of many a wrestling Jacob; they have been the channel through which thousands of Christians have poured out of full hearts their deep gratitude to God; they have chased away trouble from many a sorrowful and heavily-burdened soul; they have united in heart and mind the peer and cottager, the master and servant, the learned and unlearned in true devotion, thanksgiving, and consecration, and lifted their souls beyond the limits of time and space; they have carried away the thoughts of the largest congregations beyond the veil, and in spirit united heaven and earth, the echo and re-echo of which have given inspiration in loneliness and distress to many a Christian; they are sung in cathedral and conventicle, in the mansion and the poorhouse, on the hillside, in the valley, on sea in storm or calm, in defeat and victory, in poverty and plenty, in all the changing scenes of life, in death, in the funeral procession, and on the brink of the

grave. The loss of these hymns to Christianity would be a calamity only next to the loss of the Scriptures themselves.

The once persecuted, misunderstood, and rejected Wesley is to-day better understood, more highly honoured, and more greatly admired than he ever was before. The man who travelled more miles, preached more sermons, published more books, organized more Christian societies than any other man since the days of the apostles, and who gave shape and form to one of the most complex ecclesiastical organizations in the world, may well command the tributes of gratitude and reverence for the memory of his life and his work which to-day, a hundred years after his death, the Churches of this and other countries are bringing to his tomb.

‘The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years,
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth.’

CHAPTER VI.

MR. WESLEY'S FIRST VISIT TO WALES.

Mr. Wesley's First Visit to the Principality—Chepstow—Abergavenny
—Pontypool—Cardiff—Newport.

'UPON a pressing invitation,' Mr. Wesley set out for Wales on Monday, October 15, 1739, and about four o'clock in the afternoon of that day preached at the foot of the Devauden Hill, two or three miles beyond Chepstow, to three or four hundred plain people, on 'Christ our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.' After the service the preacher was willingly received into his house by one who is spoken of as 'an old disciple of Christ,' whither he was followed by many people, to whom he showed their need of a Saviour from the words, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit.' The next morning Wesley more fully described the way of salvation, taking for his text the words, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved'; and then taking leave of his kind and hospitable friend, before two he reached Abergavenny. Here, for some reason, Wesley felt a strong aversion to preaching. However, he went to the gentleman in whose grounds Whitefield had previously preached, to ask the same privilege. This request was very heartily granted, when the clergyman, to whom Wesley also wrote, had refused the use of the church, the gentleman also inviting the preacher to his house. A large congregation came together, in number about a thousand people, who patiently stood in the cold, frosty air of the evening, whilst the preacher, from Acts xxviii. 22, simply described the plain old religion of the

Church of England, then almost everywhere spoken against, under the new name of Methodism. An hour later the same subject was more fully explained to those who were gathered together in a neighbouring house, by showing them how God hath exalted Jesus ‘to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and the remission of sins.’

The following morning Wesley preached again, and, notwithstanding the cold, frosty air, five or six hundred people listened attentively whilst he explained the nature of that salvation which is through faith alone, and the nature of that living faith through which cometh this salvation.

About noon he reached Usk, where he preached to a small company of poor people on the words, ‘The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.’ One grey-headed old man wept and trembled exceedingly, whilst two or three others became so contrite and broken-hearted, that they refused to be comforted until they were assured of redemption and forgiveness through the blood of Christ.

In the afternoon of that same day Wesley went on to Pontypool, where, for want of a more convenient place, he stood in the street, and cried aloud to five or six hundred attentive hearers to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ that they might be saved. In the evening he preached again, showing the people the willingness of Jesus to save all who come unto God through Him, and many were melted into tears. The next morning the preacher endeavoured to make his hearers realize their absolute need of the Saviour, and the utter vanity of all other supports and dependences, by explaining and applying the words, ‘To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.’

The same day, October 18, Wesley proceeded to Cardiff, where, as the clergyman was unwilling to allow him the use of the church for a service on a week-day, he preached in the Shire Hall at five o'clock. Several of those who were present

endeavoured to create a disturbance, but were prevented. At seven o'clock the same evening, Wesley preached again to a much larger audience, on the blessedness of mourning and poverty of spirit. Deep attention sat on the faces of the hearers, and the preacher cherished the hope that many had believed his report.

To the service at Devauden Hill, on the previous Monday, a poor woman came in great heaviness. She walked six miles in order to hear the great evangelist. She became deeply convinced of sin, and longed to be free from her burden, but could obtain no relief. From Devauden she followed Wesley to Abergavenny, from thence to Usk, and from Usk to Pontypool, where, between twelve and one o'clock in the morning, after a severe struggle, the Lord got unto Himself the victory, delivering the prey from the hands of the mighty, and filling the woman's heart with His love and the consciousness of His forgiveness and favour. Rejoicing in God her Saviour with joy unspeakable, the woman followed Wesley from Pontypool to Cardiff.

On Friday morning, October 19, Wesley found his way to Newport, where he preached 'to the most insensible, ill-behaved people' he had met with in Wales. One man during the greater part of the service cursed and swore incessantly, and towards the close took up a great stone which he many times attempted to throw, but was prevented from doing so. The same day he returned to Cardiff, and in the afternoon preached again in the Shire Hall, many of the gentry being present in the audience. 'Such freedom of speech,' says Wesley, 'I have seldom had as was given to me in explaining the words, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." At six almost the whole town, I was informed, came together, to whom I explained the six last beatitudes. My heart was so enlarged, I knew not how to give over, so that we continued three hours. Oh may the seed they have

received have its fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life !'

This brought to a close Wesley's first visit to the Principality. On Saturday the 20th he returned to Bristol. He was very favourably impressed by what he had seen of the natural beauty of the country, and of the readiness of the people to receive the gospel. He confessed that he had seen no part of England so pleasant for sixty or seventy miles together, as those parts of Wales through which he had passed. The people 'were ripe for the gospel.' They were eager to be instructed. Although they were familiar with the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and Catechism, they were as ignorant of the way of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ as Red Indians. The preaching of the great evangelist awoke in them a sense of their need. They felt that the man had a special message for them. It appealed to their consciences and hearts, and excited in them an earnest longing for a new and a better life. This explains the eagerness with which they flocked to hear him, as he took his stand on the village-green and in the street, when the churches were closed against him, and preached to the people the Word of Life. During the five days he preached fifteen times, and God gave the increase. It is not at all improbable that a Society was formed in Cardiff immediately after his first visit there. In the following year, when Charles Wesley visited the little town, and for some reason failed to preach, there were several hungry souls, he says, greatly disappointed thereby, whom he sent to the 'Society'; and when he returned to Bristol, his brother was anxious to know all the particulars that Charles could give him about the state of the little flock in Cardiff.

In six months Wesley had crossed the Severn a second time, at the 'pressing instance' of Howell Harris, from whom he appears to have received the 'pressing invitation' which led to the first visit in the autumn of the previous year.

It was through the influence of this earnest evangelist that Whitefield had been induced to visit Wales a few months before Wesley. At Bath, Whitefield had met Griffith Jones of Llanddowror, from whose lips he had heard the cheering tidings of the wondrous work which was going on in the Principality, and doubtless of the zealous and successful labours of Harris. When he reached London at the end of the year 1738, he wrote Harris, who in his reply tells Whitefield how greatly blessed he had been in reading his diary, and that his soul had been quite carried away by what he had heard of the demonstration of divine love and favour in London ; adding by way of conclusion, ‘Should you come to Wales, I hope it would not be labour in vain.’

It was not long before Whitefield acted upon this broad suggestion, and these two congenial spirits, ‘whose souls blended together like two flames,’ to the great joy of each met in Cardiff. Together they journeyed to Newport, Usk, Pontypool, Abergavenny, Caerleon, and Trelech—preaching as they went to crowded audiences, in the churches when permitted, and also in the open air—one in English and the other in Welsh. Whitefield was delighted with Harris, and Harris was greatly encouraged and strengthened in his work by Whitefield. Harris appears to have accompanied Whitefield to London, where he probably spent the greater part of the spring co-operating with the Methodists in their work. Charles Wesley became deeply attached to him, and speaks of him at this time as a man after his own heart.

Wesley’s second visit to Wales would not be likely to yield him so much pleasure as the first had done. Already the beginnings of the great controversy which afterwards rent Methodism in twain were making themselves heard like the distant rumblings of approaching thunder. In London and in Bristol certain members were beginning to disturb the harmony of the Societies by the Calvinistic doctrines which they not only held, but would persist in discussing and spreading ; so

that it became necessary for Wesley, in the interests of peace and harmony, to cease to recognise such disturbers as having any connection with his followers. Amongst those who became separated from the Wesleys was John Cennick, who had been befriended by Wesley, and employed as a lay preacher. About fifty persons who sympathised with Cennick's views went out with him. Efforts were made, by the circulation of false reports respecting Wesley's action in refusing to recognise any longer Cennick and his followers, to bring him and his work into discredit, and to alienate them from the sympathies of others. An earnest attempt had been made to prejudice Harris against him, as he found when they met at Llanithiel on the occasion of this second visit.

Charles Wesley, who had become deeply attached to Harris, used his influence to remove Harris's prejudice, and to prevent his becoming alienated. Whilst in Cardiff he sent a messenger with the following letter, which reflects the greatest credit on the writer's Christian spirit and desire for peace :—

'MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—In the name of Jesus Christ I beseech you, if you have His glory and the good of souls at heart, come immediately and meet me here. I trust we shall never be two in time or eternity. O my brother, I am grieved that Satan should get a moment's advantage over us, and am ready to lay my neck at your feet for Christ's sake. If your heart is as my heart, hasten in the name of the Lord to your second self.'

C. WESLEY.'

A few days after the two men met at St. Brides, where Charles Wesley had been preaching. All misunderstandings vanished at the sight of each other, and their hearts were knit together as at the beginning. 'We sang a hymn of triumph,' says Mr. Wesley. 'God had prepared his heart for this meeting. At the sacrament he had found the spirit of martyrdom falling upon him, and immediately I was brought

to his remembrance, his heart overflowed with love, and he thought we were going hand in hand to glory.'

It is very evident that what unfavourable impressions had been made on Harris's mind by Wesley's detractors, were for the time completely removed, as were also the prejudices which he had begun to form in favour of Calvinistic teaching. In the following year on his way home from London he called at Bristol, where he desired an interview with Wesley, who found him with a Mr. Humphreys and a Mr. S——, two ardent Calvinists, with whom Wesley disputed for two hours on their favourite subject—in all probability introduced by them; ending with prayer at Wesley's suggestion, and parting in love, where they had begun. The next day Harris waited on Wesley at the new room, and confessed that he renounced the decree of reprobation, and utterly abhorred it. ‘And as to the not falling from grace—(1) He believed that it ought not to be mentioned to the unjustified, or to any that were slack and careless, much less that lived in sin; but only to the earnest and disconsolate mourners. (2) He did himself believe it was possible for one to fall away who had been “enlightened” with some knowledge of God, “who had tasted of the heavenly gift, and been made partaker of the Holy Ghost”; and wished we would all agree to keep close, in the controverted points, to the very words of Holy Writ. (3) That he accounted no man so justified as not to fall, till he had a thorough, abiding hatred to all sin, and a continual hunger and thirst after all righteousness.’

On sundry occasions afterwards Harris loyally defended Wesley and his teaching against those who sought to spread dissension, and to injure Wesley's character, beseeching them even with tears to follow after the things which make for peace.

Harris was present at the Conference of 1747, held in London, when the doctrines of faith, Christian assurance, and entire sanctification were fully considered. He preached at

the Foundry in 1750. ‘A powerful orator,’ writes Wesley, who heard him, ‘both by nature and grace, but he owes nothing to art or education.’ During the intervals they were in frequent communication with each other. At the Conference of 1767, Whitefield and Harris were both present, together with many stewards and local preachers. Love and harmony prevailed to the end.

CHAPTER VII.

METHODISM IN MONMOUTHSHIRE.

The Devauden—Mr. Wesley at Llanyches—Llantarnum—Newport—Risca—New Chapel at Chepstow—Llanbradoc—Monmouth—Wide Circuit—Monmouth Circuit formed—Newport, Head of Circuit—John Hughes of Caerleon—Newport New Chapel—Dr. Coke—Thomas Webb.

MONMOUTH was the first of the Welsh counties visited by Wesley. On the little green at the foot of the Devauden, two or three miles beyond Chepstow, and not far from where the labours of Wroth and Cradoc a hundred years before had been so owned and prospered by God, the founder of Methodism preached his first sermon on Welsh soil; Abergavenny, Pontypool, Usk, and Newport, in the same county, being visited the same week. His first convert, as far as can be ascertained, was the poor woman who walked six miles to hear him preach at Devauden, and following him to Abergavenny, Usk, and Pontypool, found peace, and stood by his side at Cardiff, the wave-sheaf of an abundant harvest. The congregations to which he preached at Abergavenny and Pontypool presented to him a favourable contrast compared with the ‘insensible, ill-behaved’ one he preached to at Newport.

Reference has already been made to the impression made on Wesley on the occasion of his first visit to Wales by the beauty of its scenery. Twenty-four years after he again affirms, ‘I’ve rode fifty miles in Monmouthshire and Brecknockshire; and I will be bold to say all England does not afford such a line of fifty miles length, for fields, meadows,



John Dwyer, A.M.

Author of "The American Slave."

woods, brooks, and gently rising mountains, fruitful to the very top.'

It was in the month of April 1740 that Wesley paid his second visit to Wales, when he preached at Llanvaches, the mother-church of Congregationalists in the Principality, where Whitefield and Harris had preached, one in English and the other in Welsh, eighteen months before. Wesley then proceeded to Pontypool, preaching there on 'By grace are ye saved, by faith,' and from thence to Llanithiel, a small place three miles beyond, where he preached the same evening and also the following morning. On the Friday of that same week he preached in Llantarnum Church, and also at Peny-rheol, near Pontypool, where 'a few were cut to the heart,' particularly Mrs. A——, who had some time before given Wesley up for a papist; the curate, Mr. E——, having declared him to be such to his personal knowledge. Wesley's sermon on the words, 'O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord,' was accompanied with great power. 'Three or four came to me,' he says, 'in such mourning as I had scarcely seen, as did a poor drunkard, between eleven and twelve, who was convinced by the word spoken on Tuesday.' The next morning Wesley preached again at Llanvaches on his way to Bristol, where the melancholy news awaited him that the chief of those who had made a disturbance a few days before had hanged himself, and that others were in great distress.

On Thursday, October 1, 1741, Wesley passed through Newport on his way to Cardiff, and on the following Saturday he proceeded to Pontypool, where he found that, notwithstanding the effort that had been made to set the people against him and his work, the love of his followers had not grown cold. Instead of disputing, as some were anxious to do, 'we betook ourselves to prayer, and all our hearts were knit together as at first.' In the afternoon he went on to Abergavenny, where he was gladly received by Mrs. James, a widow, who shortly afterwards became the devoted wife of

Whitefield. In consequence, however, of the evil reports which had been circulated among the people, here also Wesley was unable to get a congregation to preach to that evening. The next morning, being Sunday, Wesley attended the Church service, and had an unexpected opportunity of receiving the Holy Communion. In the afternoon he heard a ‘plain, useful sermon on the Pharisee and Publican,’ which he took for his subject in the evening, and explained at large to the best-dressed congregation he had ever seen in Wales. The word was with power. Two persons came to the preacher afterwards ‘convinced of sin, and groaning for deliverance.’

The next morning he preached again at Pontypool ‘to a small but deeply attentive congregation.’

In response to a request from Howell Harris, Mr. Wesley set out for Wales again a fortnight afterwards from Bristol, whither he had gone after his previous visit. In consequence of a delay, Wesley did not reach the appointed place of meeting—Will-Creek, near the New Passage—until late. Finding that Harris had not been there, and that nothing could be heard of him there, he turned back to Mather, going on to Llanmartin, two miles distant, the next morning. Here he fell in with Daniel Rowlands of Llangeitho, the two riding together to Machen, which place they reached at noonday. Here they were joined about an hour later by Harris and many of his friends from distant parts, and the spirit of peace and love rested upon them all. At three o’clock they went to the church, a vast congregation having come together though the notice was so short. Wesley preached in English, and was followed by Rowlands in Welsh. After the service, Wesley and the two Welsh brethren went to St. Brides, in the Moors, where Rowlands again preached.

After visiting two or three places in the adjoining county of Glamorgan, Mr. Wesley returned to Newport on the following Wednesday morning. A clergyman who happened to be

in an adjoining room in the house in which Wesley was resting, shouted in an insolent voice so that Wesley might hear, ‘Where are those vagabond fellows?’ meaning the Methodist preacher and his companion, of course. Wesley’s friend soon took the shouter in hand, and he quickly beat a retreat. But as Wesley was getting his horse to resume his journey, the man returned and said, ‘Sir, I am afraid you are in the wrong way; but if you are right, I pray God to be with you and prosper your undertaking.’

About one o’clock the same day Wesley reached Callicut, and there preached to a small but attentive congregation from the words, ‘Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled.’

The next visit to the county was made in May 1743, at the request of Mr. Phillips, the rector of Maesymynys. Being unable to reach their destination the same day on which they started from Bristol, Mr. Wesley and his companion, an old Oxford pupil, spent the night at Bwlch, about five ‘Welsh miles’ beyond Abergavenny, reaching Builth the following morning just as Church prayers began, where they were met by Mr. Phillips. Mr. Wesley preached on a tombstone in the afternoon at four, and again at seven o’clock, two Justices of the Peace—Mr. Gwynne and Mr. Prothero—standing by his side, and the people in front listening with the most serious and eager attention.

In crossing the mountains from Crughowell to Cardiff on the 1st of September 1747, Wesley came in the afternoon to ‘a little village at the foot of the hills called Risca,’ where he was treated with great civility by the people at the inn where he rested for refreshment. A son of the woman who kept the inn, whom Wesley calls ‘a genteel young man,’ had heard him preach in Bristol a year or two before, and was greatly pleased to have the opportunity of showing kindness to the man of God whose preaching had so much impressed him. He accompanied Mr. Wesley a distance of two miles beyond Risca, to show him the nearest way to Cardiff, and

begged to have the honour of entertaining him at his own house the next time he passed that way. This appears to have been the first visit Mr. Wesley paid to Risca.

The passage across the Severn was often very tedious and difficult, the occasion of great delay and disappointment, and was sometimes attended with great risk. A somewhat noteworthy coincidence is mentioned by Mr. Wesley, as happening to himself and his brother in different parts of the country. John, in crossing the Trent on his way to Grimsby, where he was expected to preach, had a very narrow escape by reason of the storm that was raging. On the same day, and apparently at the same hour, the boat in which Charles was crossing the Severn at the New Passage was carried away by the wind, and in the utmost danger of splitting upon the rocks. However, God protected His servants, and brought both in safety to land.

Mr. Wesley refers somewhat frequently to his long delays in crossing the Severn. On one occasion, when on his way to Ireland, he had to wait nearly seven hours, the boatmen fearing to venture across in the storm. Advantage was taken of this delay to preach to a small but serious congregation at Aust. The passage was made between four and five in the afternoon, Chepstow being reached just after sunset, and the Star, five miles beyond, at eight, where the night was spent.

On another occasion he had to wait more than four hours at the New Passage, in consequence of which a large congregation was disappointed at Newport. At Bedwas, also, a congregation was kept waiting some hours. On his arrival, however, wet and weary as he was, Wesley preached to the people, and after the service had occasion to rejoice in his labours.

On Monday, March 29, 1762, Mr. Wesley speaks of preaching in the New Room at Chepstow. This in all probability was the opening service of the first Methodist chapel in Chepstow, and also in the county of Monmouth. A neighbouring clergyman was present, who lived on the same

staircase with Wesley at Christ Church College, and who at that time was the more serious of the two.

On Wednesday, August 17, 1763, Wesley preached in the New Room at Coleford, which, though a large building, would not contain all the people who had come to hear him. On his way to Coleford he preached at Chepstow. The following day he preached at Crughowell, where he found a congregation waiting for him, some of whom had come many miles to hear him, and there was not a single light or inattentive hearer in the whole congregation.

On the occasion of his next visit to Chepstow, Mr. Wesley preached in the open air, standing at the door of a Mr. Cheek's house. Why he did not preach in the Room is not explained. Probably the building was too small, as the congregation was a large one and well behaved.

On Friday, September 11, 1767, Wesley visited Llanbradoc, which he describes as 'a single house, delightfully situated near the top of a high mountain,' and in the evening preached to a serious company of plain Welshmen, with uncommon enlargement of heart. The next day he reached Chepstow before noon, and again preached at a friend's door 'to a civil, unconcerned congregation.'

These two places were visited again the following year. Two years after Wesley preached again at Llanbradoc, and yielding to the importunity of his friends, preached at Chepstow, which at that period seems to have had more of his attention than any other place in the country.

After an absence of thirty-five years, Mr. Wesley again visited Newport on August 28, 1775, and preached to a large and serious congregation. The people he had preached to before were wild as bears, he says, but now how amazingly changed.

In the month of July 1777, Wesley visited Monmouth, on his way from Worcestershire, and preached there. His service had been announced, and much disturbance was expected. The people, however, contrary to this expectation,

were deeply attentive. He had passed through Monmouth on other previous journeys, but this seems to have been the first time he ever preached there.

Two years later Wesley visited Monmouth again, Charles Wesley and his family accompanying him, and preached in the evening and the following morning, without observing one inattentive person in either audience. He here met with an accident, by falling down a steep pair of stairs, which might have been serious, but happily did no harm beyond breaking to pieces an almanac-case which was in his pocket, and the steel clasp of his shoe-buckle. The next time he visited Monmouth he was the guest of a Mr. C——, a Justice of the Peace, and one of the greatest men in the town, whose sympathy and support produced a good effect on the rabble of the town, so that both night and morning he had a quiet and favourable opportunity of preaching to those who came to hear him. This same gentleman apparently gave him hospitality and support on the occasion of his next visit to Monmouth in 1784, the result being that he secured a quiet hearing, and the presence of rich as well as poor people in his congregation. It is evident that there were many people in Monmouth who had been impressed by Wesley's ministry, and had become very tenderly attached to him. The attachment was also mutual. After spending a whole day in the town and neighbourhood, enjoying the beautiful scenery, he confesses 'it was with some difficulty that I broke from this affectionate people.'

The last visit to Monmouth was made in 1788, when Mr. Wesley was eighty-five years of age. Finding that his host of previous years had done with him, he became the guest of his old friend, Mr. Johnson. The young woman whom he found in the place of her beautiful older sister is spoken of as 'a jewel indeed, full of faith and love, and zealous of good works.' The aged man preached both evening and morning with the demonstration of the Spirit, the whole congregation, both the rich and poor, being made sensible of it.

In connection with his earlier visits to South Wales, Pontypool and Abergavenny received more attention than any other places in the county of Monmouth, but later he more frequently visited Chepstow and Newport. He found the Newport people hard to impress. When he first preached there, it was to an ‘insensible’ congregation. Of his last recorded service there he writes: ‘I hardly know another such place; the people hear and hear, and are as much moved as the benches they sit upon.’

The whole of the county of Monmouth was included in the Glamorgan Circuit up to the year 1796. In 1794 the Rev. James Buckley was appointed by the Conference to the Circuit, which at that time extended from Chepstow as far as to Llanelly, in Carmarthenshire.

In 1808 the Circuit was divided, and Monmouth became the head of a new Circuit—the Rev. William Radford being the superintendent, and John Radford his colleague. Both were Bristol men. William was brought to God under the ministry of Benson the commentator, John under the preaching of the venerable Henry Moore. John attended the Hull Conference in 1748, and was about to start on his journey home, when he was suddenly seized with English cholera, and in a few days died.

The Monmouth Circuit at that time covered the entire area at present embraced by the Abergavenny, Pontypool, Ross, Chepstow, and Cinderford Circuits. For eleven years, wide as it was, it was under the care of two ministers only—a third was appointed in 1820. The superintendent appointed to the Circuit that year was Hugh Carter, who for some years had been in the Welsh work. Mr. Carter possessed private property,—a very unusual thing among Methodist preachers in those early days,—and at his death bequeathed large legacies to the Wesleyan Missions; but, in consequence of some legal technicality, the good old man’s intention was frustrated, to the loss of the Connexional funds. In 1821 Abergavenny was made the head of a new Circuit,

with two ministers. The Chepstow Circuit was formed in 1850, with one minister; and the Ross Circuit, with two ministers, was formed in 1865. In 1874 Ross was divided, becoming the head of a new Circuit. Abergavenny was divided in 1851 by the formation of the Pontypool Circuit. At the present time there are nine ministers employed in the Circuits once included in the old Monmouth Circuit, with other paid lay agents. There is a membership—including those on trial and in junior Society classes—of over 2000.

Newport was separated from Cardiff, and made the head of a Circuit, in 1810. At this time the membership was very small. According to the returns for 1809, there were only 156 members in the whole of the Cardiff Circuit, which then included Cardiff, Newport, Bridgend, Cowbridge, and Pontypridd; the Cardiff Welsh Circuit, which was separated from that of the English in 1808, returning 508.

Newport at the beginning, and for many years, proved a somewhat barren soil for Wesleyan Methodism. Wesley himself, as we have seen, found the people somewhat unimpressible, and in all probability for that reason did not give it the attention which he gave to Cardiff and some other places in Wales. It would be visited regularly by the ministers of the Glamorganshire Circuit, and probably Thomas Taylor in his Welsh journeys also did something to spread Methodism there; but these efforts were attended with only a small success. When the late Thomas Williams, who will be remembered by some of the old Methodists of Newport, joined the Society, which met in the old room opened by Wesley—and which stood on the site at present occupied by the Stow Hill Baptist Chapel—he was the only male member, and besides himself there were only a few females connected with it.

One of the ministers appointed to the Cardiff Circuit in 1796 was John Hughes, a native of Brecon, and intimately acquainted with Dr. Coke. With the exception of the book steward, Thomas Olivers, he was the only Wesleyan minister

at that time able to preach in Welsh ; and there were many connected with the several Societies throughout the wide Circuit who preferred the Welsh preaching.

Mr. Hughes's parents intended him to take Orders in the Church of England, and educated him for that purpose. This he stedfastly and persistently declined to do. He had been converted through the instrumentality of the Methodists, he had read and was greatly impressed by Fletcher's Checks, and had resolved to live and die a Methodist. For some time he was placed under the care of his uncle, the Rev. John Thomas, the Vicar of Caerleon on Usk, it being hoped that he might thereby be induced to alter his decision ; but it was of no avail. Hughes was resolute and decided. Shortly after leaving his uncle he was appointed to Cardiff, and as one of the ministers of that Circuit he occasionally had to go to Caerleon, where his uncle lived, to preach. The services were held in a small cottage belonging to an elderly widow. One afternoon whilst Mr. Hughes was preaching, some ill-disposed youths made a bold and daring attempt upon both preacher and people.

When the vicar heard of what had taken place he called to see Mr. Hughes, although greatly displeased with him for becoming a Methodist preacher, and told him that he had not nerve enough for such rough work, and that he would never get promotion as long as he remained among the Methodists. Hughes replied, 'I never entered the work with a view of ecclesiastical promotion, but I know that purity of motive and fidelity will secure respect.' The vicar, whether prompted by pity or affection, blamed his nephew for not making his home at the vicarage, and used his influence with the people in his favour. The incident was overruled for good, and the wrath of man was made to praise God. Mr. Hughes was instrumental in infusing new life into the various Societies throughout the Circuit, and being a good Welsh scholar was able to preach the gospel to a much larger constituency.

The first Methodist chapel in Newport was built in 1808 in Commercial Road, and was enlarged in 1849.

Newport Methodism suffered considerably as the result of the agitation of 1849. Several local preachers and workers joined the reformers. Mr. Thomas Webb, who was converted at Liverpool under a sermon by Theophilus Lessey, was for many years a good class-leader and generous steward. W. H. Davies, a near relative, Mr. Christopher, R. Davies, J. Atkins were wise and loyal standard-bearers. More recently, Messrs. T. P. Wansbrough, Alderman Goldsworthy, T. Pugsley, public men and magistrates; R. Gething, L. B. Moore, S. Harse, D. E. Davies, J. Saunders, G. D. Ingram, W. B. Seymour, all men of considerable influence, who are leaders and stewards, and are doing good work. While the names of Cory, Cordey, Holehouse, Jones, Ogden, Pyer, Roberts, Watson, and others show the position of Methodism in the town. The new chapel on Stow Hill is one of the most beautiful and commodious in the county. The Pilgwenlly and Maindee Chapels are comfortable and attractive. The chapels at Marshes Rood, Price Street, Barnardtown, and Rogerstown are centres of good work for Christ. Risca was separated from Newport and made the head of a new Circuit in 1867, and with good chapels at Pontywain, Abercarne, Newbridge, Crumlin, Blackwood, Machan, and Gellyhaf is rapidly becoming a strong Circuit. The Monmouthshire valleys have not been without some noble Methodists, and they have sent out some eminent ministers. The names of the Revs. D. C. Ingram, W. D. Walters, Robert Morton, William Burchell, and Jabez Ingram will suffice to confirm this statement. Mr. Greenway, Pontypool; W. Walters, Pontnewynydd; Edmunds, Garndipeth, J. R. Jacobs, Risca; W. Bytheway, Pontypool; Scanlan, Arnold, and Heeley, Abergavenny, men in high positions, local preachers, class-leaders, and stewards; and while we have such men, Methodism will continue, under divine blessing, to win greater victories for Christ.

CHAPTER VIII.

METHODISM IN CARDIFF AND NEIGHBOURHOOD.

Mr. Wesley's Visits—Captain Phillips—Charles Wesley, Attempt at his Life—Sword taken—Preaching at Porthkerry—Great Power—Mr. Jones—Fonmon Castle—Llantrisant—Llandaff—Bridgend—Cowbridge—The Work at Fonmon Castle—First Chapel in Cardiff—Last Visit.

To Cardiff belongs the honour of possessing the mother-church of Wesleyan Methodism in the Principality. Here was formed the first Society, and here was built the first chapel by Wesley's followers in the whole of Wales.

Mr. Wesley visited Cardiff for the first time on Thursday, October 18, 1739, when he preached in the Shire Hall in the afternoon and evening, and also in the afternoon and evening of the following day, with great power. His second visit was on Wednesday, April 9, of the following year, when he expounded 'the story of the Pharisee and Publican.' The next day he preached three times, after which he rode to Watford, near Caerphilly, where a few were joined together in prayer and in provoking one another to love and good works. Watford is the name of a Presbyterian or Independent chapel still used as a place of worship by the Congregationalists. It has existed since the establishment of Nonconformity in Wales. The first Calvinistic Methodist Association was held there some time after the church became divided. Some of the members becoming Calvinistic went forth and established themselves at Whiterross, about two miles from Watford, where they built a new chapel.

The first Wesleyan Methodist Society in Cardiff was formed

in all probability in April 1740, on the occasion of Mr. Wesley's second visit to the town.

In November of that year Mr. C. Wesley visited Cardiff for the first time, in response to an invitation from Captain Phillips, and Mr. Wells, the incumbent of St. Andrew's, a personal friend, who invited Mr. Wesley to preach in his church.

With the voice of praise and thanksgiving the poet of Methodism landed on Welsh soil on Friday, November 6, 1740, being met by Mr. Wells, who took him at first to his own house, and accompanied him to a meeting of the little Society. Mr. Wesley stayed with a Mr. Glascot. He preached in the evening after his arrival on 'Ho, every one that thirsteth,' and the word was received with readiness. The next day, accompanied by a Mr. Williams, he rode to St. Andrews, which he speaks of as a little town four Welsh miles from Cardiff, where he preached on 'Come unto me, all ye that labour,' Mr. Wells granting him the use of his own pulpit. Mr. Hodges, Rector of Wenvoe, was present, and desired him to preach in his church the next day. In the evening he returned and preached in Cardiff.

On returning to Cardiff Mr. C. Wesley found it necessary to exert himself to restore peace and harmony in the Society there. A division of feeling and opinion and some soreness had been produced amongst the members by the Calvinistic teaching of Howell Harris. Mr. C. Wesley was more concerned about the harmony of the little Society, and the prosperity of the work of God, than about Harris's views on predestination. The greater part of the following day was spent by him in pacifying those who had been angered by the preaching of Harris.

In company with Mr. Wells he called on the clergyman, who invited him to dinner and also to preach in his church, which invitation he accepted on the following Sunday. In the morning he read prayers, and preached to a large congregation,

administering the Sacrament at the close to many strangers. In the afternoon he read prayers again, baptized a child, and preached both law and gospel with great plainness. ‘My hearers were surprisingly attentive,’ says the preacher. ‘Only one went out. I continued my discourse till it was dark, and found much comfort in having delivered my message.’ In the evening he again occupied the pulpit, and experienced much enlargement of heart whilst expounding the love of God. He took occasion also to speak publicly of Howell Harris, bearing testimony to his high character and work, upbraiding those who were opposed to him, and claiming for him that he was one of the greatest benefactors the country had ever had. At the close of the service all joined in hearty prayer for the great Welsh evangelist.

The next day Mr. C. Wesley went to Llandaff, and sought permission to preach in the cathedral. He was referred to the chapter, but not caring to urge his request any further, he went on to St. Nicholas. Here the church was closed against him. A Mr. Deer, however, who lived near, placed his house at the preacher’s disposal, who thankfully availed himself of the opportunity, and preached with much freedom and power to the people, offering Christ to all.

On his return to Cardiff he found it necessary to rebuke a woman who was puffed up with conceit, boasting of her graces and taking it upon her to teach others. ‘I told her,’ says Mr. Wesley, ‘she had deceived her own soul, and brought a scandal upon religion. She flew into self-justification. God, who knew her heart, would not quench the smoking flax so. But I cut her short, and with six plain words, God accompanying them with His power, struck her down into the deep. She cried out, “I am damned, I am damned,” and was stripped of all as in a moment.’

The next day he preached at Wenvoe. The rector—Mr. Hodges, who became a faithful Methodist, and for many years attended the Annual Conference—after they had taken sweet

counsel together, as Wesley was taking his departure, in great simplicity desired his prayers and a kiss.

The next day, accompanied by Mr. Wells and Mr. Thomas, a curate, a man of ‘great simplicity, who preached not himself but Christ Jesus the Lord,’ Mr. Wesley preached at Llanisan, the Lord never being nearer to him than on this occasion.

On the Thursday of the same week he preached to the prisoners with considerable power. Two women fell down as dead, and the infection ran through all. They were made to realize that the gospel is indeed the power of God.

The next day he preached at Micelston, and returned to Cardiff in the spirit of triumph.

His preaching in the town and neighbourhood was the one great topic of conversation in the public-houses, the streets, and homes of the people. The power of God had manifestly accompanied the poet-preacher, and the prisoners had been benefited and blessed. The players were made to feel the effect of his work, and were greatly exasperated to find the attendance at the play so thinned. They challenged Wesley to a play, to which he replied, ‘Suffice for the time past; I now serve another Master.’

On Saturday, the 15th, he preached at Watford on ‘Christ our wisdom,’ etc. Two ministers were present, the one an Arian and the other a Baptist; the latter of the two refusing to allow that either justification or sanctification was necessary to salvation.

It became known that Mr. Wesley was to preach in the church on the following Sunday, and a band of men banded themselves together, bound with a curse, to create a disturbance in the church, and prevent the preacher from proceeding with the service. The psalms for the morning very appropriately began with the words, ‘O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance; Thy holy temple have they defiled.’ The second lesson was taken from John iii., containing the account of our Lord’s contention with the

Pharisees. The text was, ‘If God be for us, who can be against us?’ The preacher was confident, even bold, in the name of Jesus Christ. The spirit of power rested upon him, and he earnestly pleaded with those who had come to the service to make a disturbance to be reconciled to God. The ringleader was not able to bear the earnest pleadings of the preacher, and in the middle of the discourse hurried his confederates out of the church. The preacher went on entreating his hearers to submit to the righteousness of God. ‘Never was my mouth and heart so enlarged,’ says he, ‘and upon my repeating, “It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save all them that believe,” a gentleman rose, and turned his back on the gospel of salvation. I called after him in vain; then earnestly prayed for him and the rest, the Spirit helping my infirmity.’

He again read prayers in the afternoon, but was not allowed to preach, to the great disappointment of many. Several players attended in another place, where Mr. Wells defended Mr. Wesley, and with great humility enforced the truths which he had delivered.

The following day Mr. Wesley preached in Llantrisant Church. Mr. Harris, the clergyman, had been persuaded to refuse his pulpit to the Methodist preacher, but having previously promised it, he would not break his word.

From Llantrisant he went to St. Brides and preached. Here he met with Howell Harris, who returned with him to Cardiff. In a meeting of the Society at which Harris was present, an effort was again made to excite opposition against him on the ground of his Calvinism and lay-preaching; but Mr. Wesley and his companion, Mr. Wells, remained stedfast in their support of their Welsh fellow-helper.

It having been arranged to sail for Bristol the next day, Mr. Wesley resolved to spend the night in taking leave of his friends. After taking supper with Mr. Wells, he went to the house of Captain Phillips, where several members of the Society

had come to meet him. Between ten and eleven o'clock a physician, the man who had walked out of church on the previous Sunday, having been instigated by his companions, came to the house in a state of intoxication, and demanded satisfaction of Mr. Wesley for calling him a Pharisee. 'I am ready to acknowledge my mistake,' said the preacher, 'if you will assure me that you went out of church to visit your patients.' To this the doctor replied, he had gone out because he disliked the discourse. 'Then, sir,' said the preacher, 'I cannot ask pardon for telling you the truth.' 'But you must forgive calling me a Pharisee,' said the doctor. 'I still insist you are a Pharisee,' rejoined the preacher, 'and cannot endure sound doctrine. My commission is to show you your sins, and I shall make no apology for so doing to you or any living man. You are a damned sinner by nature, and a Pharisee like me, and this testimony I should bear before rulers and kings. You are a rebel against God, and must bow your stiff neck to Him before you can be forgiven.' 'How do you know my heart?' asked the doctor. 'My heart sheweth me the wickedness of the ungodly,' said the preacher. 'I am as good a Christian as yourself,' said the doctor. 'You are no Christian at all,' replied the preacher, 'unless you have received the Holy Ghost.' 'How do you prove that you have the Holy Ghost?' asked the doctor. 'By searching your heart and showing you that you are a sinner,' was the reply. The doctor, not caring to argue the matter any further, took up his cane and would have struck Mr. Wesley had not the blow been intercepted by Captain Phillips. One of the men present tripped up the doctor, who became very much enraged, and in his fury struck and hurt several of the women, among whom there was great consternation. He was at length thrust out of the house, and the door was shut.

Very soon it was burst open by a justice and the bailiff or head magistrate. The bailiff began to expostulate with the preacher for insulting the doctor, telling him that he ought to

make some public satisfaction, seeing that the insult had been offered in public. ‘Mr. Bailiff,’ replied Mr. Wesley, ‘I honour you for your office’ sake; but if you or His Majesty King George were among my hearers, I should tell you both that you were by nature damned sinners. In church, while I am preaching, I have no superior but God; and shall not ask man leave to show him his sins. As a rule, it is your duty to be a terror to evil-doers, but a praise to them that do well.’ The magistrate became exceedingly civil, and went on to say that he had come to prevent Mr. Wesley from being insulted, and endeavoured to assure him of his good-will, by saying that no one should touch a hair of his head. Whilst they were talking, the enraged doctor made another attempt to get at Mr. Wesley, and so the two magistrates were afforded an opportunity of attesting their good-will, which they also did by putting out the disturber of the peace. ‘The magistrates went their way, and we continued our triumph in the name of the Lord our God,’ says Mr. Wesley. ‘The shout of a King was among us. We sang on unconcerned, though these sons of Belial, the players, had beset the house. They were armed, and threatened to burn the house down. The ground of their quarrel with me is, that the gospel has starved them. We prayed and sang with great tranquillity till one o’clock in the morning; then I lay down till three; rose again; and was scarce got into the room when they discovered a player just by me, who had stolen in unobserved. They seized him, and F. Farley wrested the sword from him. There was no need of drawing it, for the point and blade were stripped an handbreadth of the scabbard. When the sword was brought, the spirit of faith was kindled among us at the sight of the danger. Great was our rejoicing within, and the uproar of the players without, who strove to force their way after their companion. My female advisers were by no means in favour of my venturing out, but rather of my deferring my journey. I preferred Mr. Wells’s advice, and

walked with him through the midst of our enemies. I called to the poor creature whom they had secured. They talked of warrants, persecutions, etc. On seeing me, he cried, "Indeed, Mr. Wesley, I did not intend to do you any harm." That, I answered, was best known to God and his own heart; but my principle was to return good for evil. Wherefore I desired that he might be released, assured him of my good wishes, and with Mr. Wells walked peaceably to the waterside, no man forbidding me. Our friends stood on the shore, while we joined in hearty thanksgiving. "The fierceness of men shall turn to Thy praise, and the fierceness of men shalt Thou restrain." Between five and six o'clock Mr. Wesley returned to Captain Phillips's house, as the tide did not serve for them to sail for Bristol. During the day he and Mr. Wells waited on the bailiff, and acknowledged his civilities during the previous night, leaving him as a trophy the player's sword. In public Mr. Wells returned thanks for the deliverance which God had wrought out for his servant. In the afternoon he preached on 'the woman of Canaan,' many of his opponents being present at the service; also the young woman for whose entertainment the players had impersonated Mr. Wesley in their play. The preacher was constrained by the love of Christ, and entreated his hearers to receive the Lord Jesus Christ. The divine presence was made manifest; the young lady trembled and prayed; the congregation was melted, and many of his greatest opponents wept aloud. The word was as fire that melteth the rocks, and the victory was now complete. 'I saw why God had brought me back,' says Wesley. The night had been one of persecution, of watching and fighting. They had wrested the sword out of the hands of the enemy, had found shelter under the shadow of the Almighty, and with praise and prayer they had conquered. After handing over to the bailiff the trophy they had won, they took the sword of the Spirit, by means of which they drew tears, without shedding blood, and their enemies

were brought to repentance, many being led to the cross of Christ. Such was Charles Wesley's first experience in Cardiff. About four o'clock in the afternoon he went on board the vessel, very soon falling sleep, and in due time safely reached Bristol, where he met his brother John, whose inquiries respecting the little flock in Cardiff he was able to answer.

On Monday, July 13, 1741, Charles Wesley visited Cardiff the second time, accompanied by a Mr. Hooper. He arrived about three in the afternoon, and at six met the Society with a view of stirring up the members to greater zeal and activity. The next day he preached with great power to the prisoners; there were about twenty felons present, who were very deeply impressed. In the evening, for nearly three hours, he again described the grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men. During this visit he preached at Wenvoe; and together with Mr. Wells, the rector of Wenvoe, and others, went on to Fonmon Castle, the residence of Mr. Jones, who was contemporary with him at Oxford. Mr. Jones was anxious to know whether Wesley was a papist, a member of the Established Church, etc., and was glad to receive satisfactory replies to all his queries.

From Fonmon, Mr. Wesley went to Porthkerry and preached. The clergyman, Mr. Richards, at first hesitated to place the church at his disposal, but afterwards yielded, probably at the request of Mr. Jones. The word was with power, and there were many penitents; the clergyman himself was deeply wrought upon, and at the close of the service apologised for hesitating to grant the use of his church. Wesley preached also at Llanisan, and again at Cardiff, on 'Wrestling Jacob,' Mr. Wells and Mr. Hodges standing by him to support him by their presence and sympathy.

There were clergymen and others in the neighbourhood who apparently were in doubt as to the propriety of lending any countenance to the irregular work of the Methodist preachers. Mr. Jones and the clergyman at Porthkerry

therefore invited them to meet Mr. Wesley, the clergyman throwing open his house for the purpose, in order that matters might be discussed in friendly counsel. None, however, accepted the invitation, but a Mr. Carne, whose address, says Wesley, was not so smooth as theirs who dwell in king's palaces. Mr. Jones restrained him. In the meantime a crowd of people had assembled, desiring to hear Mr. Wesley preach. So many had come together that the church was not big enough to hold them. Some one suggested that a window should be taken out to enable those outside to hear the preacher better. Mr. Carne threatened to leave if it were done; so the suggestion was not carried out. The sight of such a multitude of people, so eager to hear the Methodist preacher, was a great annoyance to the not very smooth-tongued clergyman, who remained standing during the prayers and sermon. The lesson for the day was very appropriate. ‘Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord’ (Jer. i. 6–8). The force and appropriateness of these words brought strength to the preacher’s heart as he read from line to line. ‘I never read prayers with more inward feeling,’ he says. The people were melted into tears, and in explaining the Good Samaritan, both preacher and people were overwhelmed, and great was the company of mourners. Mr. Carne had come, as he told him, to judge Mr. Wesley, and at the close of the service he remarked, ‘Sir, you have got very good lungs, but you will make the people melancholy. I saw them crying throughout the church.’ Turning to Mr. Jones, he said, ‘You will make yourself ridiculous all over the country by encouraging such a fellow.’ Mr. Jones tried to convince him, but in vain. Many of the people followed Mr. Wesley to Fonmon Castle,

where he preached again the same day. There the divine power came down upon the congregation in such an overwhelming manner that nearly all who were present—the three clergymen, Wells, Hodges, and Richards included—were brought to their knees, pleading with God on their own behalf or on the behalf of others. The voice of praise, heard as it arose from the kitchen and parlour of the Castle, was heard along the roads and lanes. Mrs. Jones joined the Methodist Society that night, and her husband soon after. The next day Mr. Wesley returned to Cardiff, and having commended the Society there to the grace of God, he went on his way rejoicing.

In about a month he returned to Cardiff, accompanied by F. Farley, one of the members of the Society there, who had probably gone to Bristol to ask for the services of one of the preachers. In crossing from Bristol, Mr. Wesley preached to those on board. One began to mock, but the others desired him to proceed, and he did so, explaining ‘Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be.’ The people were impressed, and the preacher found no difficulty in pressing home to them the truth.

On reaching Cardiff, he found that the Assizes were being held that day, in consequence of which a large number of people were in the town, and he had a big congregation to preach to at five o'clock in the morning. He also preached at Wenvoe, Porthkerry, and Fonmon Castle the dining-room of which was used as a chapel. At Porthkerry there was a gracious outpouring of the Spirit, and Wesley preached for two hours. The same evening at Fonmon he continued preaching and praying until ten o'clock. Even then the family and visitors were not able to cease, but went on rejoicing together till one o'clock in the morning. The next day he paid a visit to Mr. John Deer, in whose house he preached when he was first at St. Nicholas, and where a small Society had been formed.

In connection with this visit he attended a revel at Llanvane (Llysfaen or Llancarvan), where an old dancer of threescore years fell down, one of his persecutors found mercy, and a poor drunkard who had tried to disturb the service was brought under the saving power of Jesus. The next morning he visited Cardiff gaol, and preached to one lying under sentence of death, who was brought to feel his need of the Saviour, and who at length found peace in Jesus Christ. Charles Wesley was greatly interested in the gracious work at Fonmon and Porthkerry, which continued for some time, and visited both places often. In connection with a visit in September 1741, he went to Cardiff gaol, where two men awaited execution, taking with him Mr. Wells and Mr. Thomas. He spoke to the condemned men the message of God's mercy, administered to them the Sacrament, and saw them die trusting in the mercy of God their Saviour. He attended a revel at Dinas Powis, and another at Whitchurch, which lasted a week, and was attended by the clergy and gentry of the neighbourhood. Much good was done here by Mr. Wesley's preaching.

Mr. C. Wesley found it necessary to lift up his voice against the practice of Sunday trading which prevailed in Cardiff. He urged the members of the Society there to abstain therefrom themselves, and to use their influence in putting down such an evil.

A watch-night service was held at Fonmon on September 17, to which the people came from the surrounding district a long distance. Mr. Wesley preached on the 'Ten Virgins,' and the people continued singing and rejoicing until two o'clock in the morning.

The next day Mr. C. Wesley returned to Bristol, taking with him Mr. Jones, who was anxious to see the work of God in that city. He attended several meetings both in Bristol and Kingswood, and was delighted with what he saw, and so filled with the power of the Holy Ghost that he was

constrained to bear his testimony. ‘At that time,’ said he, ‘when the Holy Ghost overshadowed him, all bodily sufferings would have been as nothing. Neither would they feel them if made partakers of the Holy Ghost in the same measure.’

The following October John Wesley paid another visit to Cardiff, setting out at night in a very heavy rain. He had a painful journey to Llanisan, where he remained until the morning at the house of a Mr. Williams, and then proceeded to Fonmon. He found the daughter of Mr. Jones ill of smallpox when he reached the Castle, with but a feeble hope of recovery, apparently. Both parents were cheerfully resigned to the Divine Will. In the evening Wesley returned to Cardiff, and preached in Shire Hall on ‘God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.’ A feast being held in the town the same day, the preacher felt it necessary to add a few words on the sin of intemperance. Whilst uttering the words, ‘As for you drunkards, you have no part in His life, you abide in death and hell,’ a man cried out vehemently, ‘I am one; and thither I am going.’ Wesley also preached at Watford. Nearly three weeks were occupied in preaching in Cardiff and its immediate neighbourhood; Porthkerry and Fonmon being a great attraction by reason of the gracious work which God was pleased to carry on there.

During this visit Mr. Wesley caught a severe cold, through preaching in small hot rooms, after riding in the cold wet nights, which brought on a fever. The good man thought his work on earth was nearly ended, but after several weeks of suffering and great weakness, he regained sufficient strength and energy to proceed with his work.

On the 1st of March 1742, Mr. Wesley set out for Wales once more. He had to wait several hours at the passage for a boat to cross the Severn. When nearly half-way over, the wind suddenly fell, and the boat being unable to bear up against the ebbing tide, was driven among the rocks, so that

it was with great difficulty and danger that they got to land. The next morning he reached Cardiff, proceeding to Wenvoe in the afternoon and Fonmon in the evening. His soul was greatly encouraged to find that his friend Mr. Jones, who had met him at Cardiff, was pressing into the fulness of God.

The next morning he preached at Bolston, and then went on to Llantrisant, where he was informed by the clergyman of the parish that the bishop had forbidden his preaching in the church there. The church being closed against him, he preached in a large room, and then met the Society, afterwards returning to Cardiff, where he spent the remainder of the week preaching to large congregations. One woman told him that she had prayed that she might never possess the new faith which he preached, and that she might never know her sins forgiven until her death; but one day, whilst reading her Bible in the quiet of her own home, and meditating on the word of God, the clear light broke in upon her soul, she realized that her sins were all blotted out, and she cried aloud, ‘My Lord and my God.’

Very shortly after this Mr. Jones of Fonmon was removed by death, which was the occasion of Mr. Wesley’s visiting the Castle again. ‘I found Mrs. Jones,’ he says, ‘thoroughly resigned to God, although feeling what it is to lose a husband, and such a husband, in the strength of his years.’

The first Methodist chapel built in Cardiff, and in the Principality, was opened by Mr. Wesley on Friday, May 6, 1743. The New Room, as Mr. Wesley calls it, stood in the centre of the town, in what is now known as Church Street. The opening service was one of rich blessing. ‘Our souls were sweetly comforted together.’ In the afternoon of the same day he preached at Llantrisant, and in the evening to a loving and serious congregation at Fonmon.

On the following day Wesley paid his first visit to Cowbridge, at the earnest request of some friends there; but the sons of Belial, banded together under the leadership of one of

two who called themselves '*gentlemen*,' persisted in shouting, cursing, blaspheming, throwing stones, and threatening even worse things, compelled him to dismiss the congregation without preaching.

The following Sunday was fully occupied. An early morning service was held at five o'clock in the Cardiff Castle yard, an afternoon service at Wenvoe, and another service in the evening at Cardiff. The day was one of great joy to the many people who had travelled long distances to hear the preacher. Many were led to feel their need of a Saviour, and to find in Him joy and salvation, so that they returned to their homes in the possession of a peace flowing like a river. 'It was a solemn and refreshing season.'

Both the brothers were frequent in their visits to Cardiff and the neighbourhood about this time, in consequence of the gracious revival of the work of God which had taken such hold of the people, especially at Fonmon, Porthkerry, and Wenvoe.

On Wednesday, October 28, 1743, Wesley again visited Cardiff, dividing his services between that place and Fonmon, Caerphilly, Llantrisant, Wenvoe, and Porthkerry. He returned to Bristol on the following Monday, and on the same day his brother in crossing the Severn to Cardiff was overtaken by a storm, and had a narrow escape. 'The waves of the sea,' he says, 'were mighty and raged horribly. When with much toiling we were come to the opposite shore, the storm caught the vessel; our sails were backed, and we were driven full on the Black Rock, where thirty-two persons lost their lives a few weeks since. But the answer of prayer, after much fatigue, brought us to the haven. It was dark when we landed; however, we had a good Guide. The darkness is no darkness to Him who conducted us through the heavy rain to the rock and fountain.' That evening he conducted a service—where he does not state—for young women servants, who dwell as on the confines of hell, and in the midst of human devils.

Charles Wesley's signal triumph over his opposers on his previous visit to Cardiff had not been forgotten by them, and, longing to be avenged, they threatened him with many things if he ever dared to appear in their town again. C. Wesley was undaunted. With the love of Christ burning in his heart, and impelled by a fervent longing 'to save poor souls out of the fire,' he went among them, and preached on the words, 'Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by,?' etc. The power of the truth was irresistible. One of the most violent of his opposers, taking the preacher by the hand, pressed him to come to his house. The others were so powerfully wrought upon that they became civil, attentive, and solemn, some of them resolving to amend their lives by the grace of God. The only person who made any disturbance in the service was a poor drunken man, who afterwards came and begged Mr. Wesley's pardon.

Mr. Wesley was much encouraged by the condition in which he found the Society. The members had grown in grace and the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and they were full of the spirit of thanksgiving and praise. The wife and daughter of the bailiff were like little children waiting for the kingdom of God, with whom he spent an hour in prayer and exhortation. Besides preaching at Cardiff, services were also conducted at Fonmon and Wenvoe. The prisoners in Cardiff gaol were also visited. Books were distributed among them, and they were earnestly entreated to be reconciled to God.

In the April of the following year, Mr. John Wesley took Cardiff on his way from Cornwall, crossing from Muirhead in a boat which had been sent for him by Mrs. Jones. He was evidently weary, if not exhausted, and wished for ease and a resting-place. The kind hospitality afforded to him at Fonmon would therefore be peculiarly grateful.

In the following August, Mr. Charles Wesley followed his brother to Wales, taking the same route. On landing at

Aberthaw he was met by Mrs. Jones, who awaited his arrival, together with her three children and some sisters from Cardiff. On reaching the Castle he was told that an attempt had been made to blacken his character by one whom he had loved as his own soul. Wesley prayed for his detractor that the Lord would humble him, and do him good in the end. On reaching Cardiff he found one of the members—the first who joined the Methodists in that town, and who had been a pattern of all the Christian graces—on his deathbed, beautifully resigned to the Divine Will, and happy in the Lord. Whilst they were united in prayer on his behalf, the man passed to his reward. Wesley was struck with what he calls ‘the lovely appearance of death,’ and confessed that no sight on earth was half so lovely in his eyes. He wished himself in the dead saint’s place.

Returning from the excitement and toil of the greatest revival he had known in Cornwall, in July 1745 John Wesley found a haven of rest at Fonmon, where he found himself ‘as it were in a new world, in peace, in honour, and abundance.’ But God’s goodness did not suffer him to remain long in the enjoyment of such luxurious rest, lest he should melt away in such sunshine. The next morning he rode to Cardiff, where there had been much disturbance, but where quiet had been restored, and preached to larger congregations than he had ever seen in Wales.

The following August, Mr. Charles Wesley and a number of Methodists with him crossed from Bristol in a boat belonging to his old friend Captain Phillips, and in the evening preached at the Wesleyan chapel, most of the gentry of the town attending the service. On the following Sunday a chair was lent to him by one who had been his greatest persecutor. So great was the change that had taken place in the behaviour of the people that the whole place seemed to be inclined towards the Methodists. At the request of the prisoners, Wesley promised to preach in the gaol, but was prevented

from carrying out his intention by the prohibition of a Mr. Michael Richards. Wesley was suffering from lameness, and was obliged to use crutches, yet he preached day after day in the various places in the neighbourhood where Societies had been formed.

He attended the service in one of the parish churches near Cardiff, hoping to join in the Holy Communion, but when the clergyman saw him in the church, he announced that no stranger would be admitted to the Lord's Table, although a general invitation had previously been given. This same minister admitted a drunken man to the Sacrament the following Sunday in the presence of Mrs. Jones of Fonmon and other eye-witnesses.

Wesley's stay at Fonmon this time was somewhat protracted, owing to his lameness and a fever which prostrated him. He, however, conducted many services at the Castle, which were largely attended by the harvesters working on the adjoining farms. He also accepted an invitation to visit Cowbridge before leaving the neighbourhood. The gentleman who had sent the invitation had also promised the use of the church. Being obliged to leave home on the day that Wesley fixed for his visit, he left instructions that the church should be opened, and if Mr. Wesley pleased he should be allowed to preach there. Wesley did not choose to do anything that might seem at all clandestine, and so sought the permission of the churchwardens, who had not the courage either to deny him or grant him leave. He therefore preached in a large hall over against the place where his brother had been previously stoned. The congregation was large and attentive, and the preacher had every reason to believe that many who heard were also pricked to the heart.

John Wesley preached to large congregations again in the Castle yard on the occasion of his next visit to Cardiff in 1746. 'All stood uncovered and attentive; and I trust few went empty away.' He also visited Neath, accompanied by

Mr. Hodges, the rector of Wenvoe, preaching on his way to and from there at Margam, also at Bridgend to a large congregation on a small green near the church, at Wilton too, and Llanmais.

The Conference of 1743 was held in Bristol, and among those present were the rector of Wenvoe and Thomas Glascot, with whom Charles Wesley found a home when he visited Cardiff the first time.

Three years later the Conference divided the country into Circuits, and of the seven which were formed the whole of Wales was one.

In September 1747, Mr. Wesley again visited the Societies, and preached at Cardiff and Fonmon on his way from Ireland. He found that a great deal of mischief had been wrought by the ‘vain janglings’ of a certain man. ‘I found the fault lay in his head, rather than in his heart. He is an honest, well-meaning man; but no more qualified, either by nature or by grace, to expound Scripture than to read lectures in Logic or Algebra. Yet men of sense have taken this dull mystical man to be far deeper than he is. And it is very natural so to do.’

In the following year Wales stands fifth in the list of Circuits. It included Cardiff, Fonmon, Llanmais, and Llantrisant.

In April 1749 Wesley again visited the Societies, and preached at various places in the Welsh Circuit. The reception he met with at Cowbridge this time very favourably contrasted with that which he received there when he first visited the place, when by reason of the noise and violence of the mob he was unable to preach. He speaks of riding to the top of a mountain on this occasion, where a large crowd of honest simple people came together, to whom he preached. He was accompanied by a man called Harry Lloyd (Harri Llwyd), who gave the people the substance of Mr. Wesley’s sermon in Welsh. ‘The behaviour of the

people recompensed us for our labour in climbing up to them.' This mountain would probably be Llanwno, between the Rhondda and Aberdare valleys, Mr. Wesley being at the time on his way from Llantrisant to Aberdare, where he arrived about noon the same day.

At the Conference of this year the office of Superintendent was created, and a Mr. Thomas — the curate, probably, of whom Charles Wesley thought and spoke so highly, or Thomas Meyrick—was appointed the Superintendent of the Wales Circuit. In 1753 two ministers, Francis Walker and William Darney, were appointed to the Circuit.

The visits of Wesley to the neighbourhood of Cardiff now became less frequent, in consequence of the larger number of places in other parts of the Principality and elsewhere claiming his attention.

After the Conference of 1758, which had been held in Bristol, he spent a fortnight at Fonmon, preaching and strengthening the Societies. His preaching at Cardiff in the chapel, the Town Hall, and also the Castle, was greatly owned of God and blessed. Many of the more genteel people heard him, and were deeply impressed. Two daughters of his old friend Thomas Glascot cried aloud for mercy.

At Margam he was greatly exercised to find that the land-owner had forbidden the Methodists to come on that estate. 'There used to be preaching here,' he says, 'till Lord Mansell, dying without children, left the estate to Mr. Talbot. He forbade his tenants to receive the preachers, and so effectually put a stop to it. But he did not glory in it long; a few months after, God called him home.'

The condition of the Societies in Cardiff and the immediate neighbourhood gave Mr. Wesley much concern at this time. In consequence of the less frequent visits of the two brothers the love of many waxed cold, and the work previously done was almost brought to nought. In 1753, after an absence of three years, it was like beginning anew in Cardiff. The

work was almost at a standstill, and the Society nearly broken up and scattered.

Ten years after he writes: ‘A man has need to be all on fire who comes into these parts, because nearly every one is as cold as ice.’ ‘I preached at W—— Church’ (Wenvoe apparently), ‘but it was hard work. Mr. H—— read the prayers, not as he did once, with such fervour and solemnity as struck almost every hearer, but like one reading an old song in a cold, dry, careless manner; and there was no singing at all. O what life was here once! But now there is not one spark left.’ The only place which gave him any encouragement at all was Aberthaw, where he found more life than anywhere else in the district. Even Fonmon had greatly declined. ‘How dull and unlovely,’ says the preacher, ‘is every place where there is nothing of God!’

In 1765 Martin Rodda was appointed to the Glamorgan Circuit, and George Story in 1766, who resided at Brecon. The following year George Hudson, Joseph Pilmoor, and William Harry were the ministers. This year 232 were reported as members of the Societies in the Circuit. Joseph Pilmoor, after travelling two years in South Wales, attended the Leeds Conference in 1769, when in response to the appeal from America, he volunteered to go there, and was appointed, along with Richard Boardman, to take charge of that important mission. So that one of the first Methodist preachers appointed to labour in America left the Principality to do so. In an old diary of Mr. Pilmoor which was recently discovered in Baltimore, he refers to his work in Wales, and how it had influenced him and prepared his mind to offer himself for mission work in America. In Wales, as in America, Calvinism was in the ascendancy, and to preach the Methodist doctrines demanded courage and considerable ability.

Mr. Wesley himself again visited Cardiff on September 9, 1767. He preached in the court-house and in the Assembly

Room at Cowbridge, attracting large congregations of both gentry and the common people ; but the state of the Cardiff Society was to him a cause of great concern. Many who at one time had been most devoted and spiritually-minded had become worldly ; others had given way to intemperance, and thereby, like Samson, had become shorn of their strength.

In August 1768 we find him preaching with great power to rich and poor at Cowbridge ; and in the evening of the same day in the Town Hall, Cardiff, exhorting the people ‘that they receive not the grace of God in vain.’ A year later, on Saturday, August 19, he preached in the church at Bridgend, where his congregation was doubled by the heavy rains stopping the operations of harvesting, driving the reapers into the church. The same evening he preached in the Assembly Room at Cowbridge, and the following morning in the church again, the vicar reading the prayers, and Mr. Wesley chose as his text, ‘Gallio cared for none of these things,’ which was part of the lesson for the day. An exceptionally large congregation assembled in the evening, when he stood on the steps of the old Castle at Cardiff and preached from the words, ‘I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.’ The day following he went on to Caerphilly.

On Wednesday, September 28, 1771, Mr. Wesley preached at Coy Church, near Bridgend ; and finding that the congregation was largely Welsh, he spoke very deliberately, in order that they might understand him. In the evening of the same day he preached ‘to high and low, rich and poor,’ in the Town Hall, Cowbridge. The two following days he addressed very large congregations in the court-house, Cardiff ; and held a love-feast, which, with the exception of one held at Trevecca, is the first on record in Wales. In this love-feast he was forcefully reminded of the days of prosperity, when Ann Jenkins, Arthur Price, and Thomas Glascot, who had probably removed to the skies, rejoiced in God together ;

and before Thomas Prosser also sowed his deadly tares among the springing wheat.

Three days were spent by Mr. Wesley in Cardiff and the neighbourhood in August 1772, during which period he preached twice in the Town Hall, in the Assembly Room at Cowbridge to a very serious congregation, in Old Castle Church near Bridgend, and in the little church at Caerphilly. Two years later, August 1774, another three days were given to Cardiff, Cowbridge, and Llandaff. The Town Hall was used in Cardiff and Cowbridge, and of the latter Mr. Wesley records, ‘the neatest of its kind I have ever seen. Not only the floor, the walls, and the ceiling are kept exactly clean, but every pane of glass.’ At Llandaff a large room was used, where he preached from ‘It is appointed unto men once to die.’ ‘Strange doctrine, and not very welcome to the inhabitants of palaces !’

In the month of August 1775 he stayed one night in Cardiff, and probably preached, but no reference is made to the services in his journal. In August 1777 he spent a week in the neighbourhood. Coming from the west by way of Margam and Bridgend, Mr. Wesley encountered a terrible storm of rain, of which he records that it saved John Prickard’s life; ‘for presently man and beast were covered with a sheet of lightning; but as he was thoroughly wet, it did him no harm.’ John Prickard was the superintendent of the Circuit for that year, ‘a man thoroughly devoted to God, and an eminent pattern of holiness,’ who entered the ministry in 1775, but was only permitted to labour for nine years, being called away to his reward in 1784, when stationed with John and Charles Wesley in London. Having arrived safely at Bridgend, Mr. Wesley preached in the evening in the Old Castle Church, and on the day following ‘to a large and serious congregation in the Town Hall at Cowbridge.’ On the Friday morning Mr. Wesley read prayers and preached at eleven in Illtyd’s church at Llantwit Major, and was greatly

impressed by the handsome structure. ‘I have not seen,’ says he, ‘so large or so handsome a church since I left England. It was sixty yards long; but one end of it is now in ruins. I suppose it has been abundantly the most beautiful, as well as the most spacious, church in Wales.’ The evening service was held in Mrs. Jones’s house, in Fontegarry, probably in the drawing-room, where many genteel people had assembled by special invitation, and were greatly impressed under the word.

Breakfasting at Fonmon, the sight of the old castle brought back memories of days when it was the centre of a glorious work of grace, when the dining-room was converted into a chapel, and the whole building became a sanctuary of praise. At noon he preached at Penmark, and in the evening in the old Castle at Cardiff. The day following being Sunday he held four services, preaching in the early morn in the Town Hall, afterwards in the little church at Caerphilly, again at the Town Hall in the afternoon, and at a Mr. Matthews’ hall at Llandaff in the evening, where the word was applied with power to every heart.

Two years later Mr. Wesley takes the same Circuit as before at Bridgend, Cowbridge, and Llandaff, and preaching at Cardiff three or four times before leaving for Newport. The change that he had witnessed at Cowbridge since his first visit was such as to fill him with exceeding joy.

In May 1781 the same plan is adopted, except that at Cowbridge he preached in ‘the room’ or new chapel, on ‘I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ.’ This room was secured in 1780. Originally it was an old smithy near the old Cowbridge (Pont - y - fon - fuwch), which was bought and converted into a place of worship. It was a small, plain building, but for years it was indeed ‘none other than the house of God,’ in which many souls were born again. During this visit Mr. Wesley refers with great tenderness to the loss of many old friends who used to welcome

him on his rounds, and greatly assist him with his work in earlier days.

His next visit to Cardiff was more like that of a passing comet. He rode from Carmarthen in time to preach in the Town Hall on the evening of Thursday, August 26, 1784. On the way he 'read over Voltaire's Memoirs of himself. Certainly,' he says, 'never was a more consummate coxcomb. But even his character is less horrid than that of his royal hero! Surely so unnatural a brute never disgraced a throne before!'¹ Mr. Wesley was at this time on his way to Bristol to meet Dr. Coke, Mr. Whatcoat, and Mr. Vasey, who had gone thither in order to embark for America.

The next visit of Mr. Wesley to Cardiff was in August 1788, when he was eighty-three years of age. He had hastened thither in order to see his old friend, Mrs. Jones of Fontegarry, who was dying, and who had expressed an earnest wish to see him once more. 'I found Mrs. Jones,' he writes, 'with several of her children about her, on the margin of the grave; worn out with that dreadful disease—a cancer. She uttered no complaint, but was all patience and resignation, showing the dignity of a Christian in weakness and pain and death. I preached on "It is appointed unto men once to die," and I believe all present felt the awful truth. I intended going to Cowbridge the next day; but being much importuned to give one day more to a dying friend, I yielded, and desired another preacher to go to supply my place. In the evening I preached from Psalm cxlvii. 3–4. The scene before us greatly confirmed the word.'

Lest the Cowbridge friends should be offended, he went over on the Friday (August 29, 1788), and preached on the nature and pleasantness of religion, to a large congregation assembled in the Town Hall, with but half an hour's notice. Returning to Fontegarry, he took his last leave of the dying

¹ Wesley's *Journals*, vol. iv. p. 275.

saint, and the same evening preached what he considered would be his last sermon at Cardiff, to a very genteel congregation, having now reached the eighty-sixth year of his age. He, however, visited Cardiff, Cowbridge, and other places only a few months prior to his death. No entry is made in his journal between July 4 and August 27, 1790, and on the latter date he remarks, 'I returned to Bristol.' At the close of the Conference which occasioned this visit to Bristol, the veteran evangelist spent three weeks in Wales. At Haverfordwest things were in a very unsatisfactory state, so Mr. Wesley wrote to the Rev. Thomas Roberts, then stationed in Bristol, asking him to come at once to take charge of that Circuit, which he characterized as the most important in all Wales. In this letter, which is referred to by Tyerman,¹ and is also inserted in the *Memoir of the Rev. Thomas Roberts*,² he invites Mr. Roberts to meet him at Cardiff or Cowbridge. 'You will see by the printed plan,' says he, 'when I shall be at either of those places.' From near Cowbridge he writes to Miss Sarah Wesley: 'I always reprove profane sailors, or what is worse, profane gentlemen, and many of them will receive it civilly if not thankfully. They all know, captains as well as common men, that swearing is not necessary. And even now we have captains of several men-of-war who do not swear at all, and never were men better obeyed.'

We have no record of his work in Cardiff or the neighbourhood during this visit, except the letter just quoted. Thomas Roberts met him at one of the places mentioned, and went on to Haverfordwest, where he afterwards received a letter from London, dated February 8, 1791, which was dictated and signed by Mr. Wesley. Although no record was made of his preaching during this visit, it is known he preached at Brecon Chapel and in the Town Hall, and the gleanings from

¹ *Life of Wesley*, vol. iii. p. 622.

² *Memoir of Thomas Roberts*, p. 41.

his letter to Mr. Roberts, dated August 18, 1790, which is still extant, render it more than probable that Mr. Wesley spent more than a week in the neighbourhood of Cardiff and Cowbridge, preaching and visiting the Societies within only a few months of his death.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GROWTH OF METHODISM IN CARDIFF AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD.

Thomas Glascot—Harry Llwyd—Timothy Thomas—Wide Circuit—Thomas Roberts and the Annuitant Society—John Hughes—Circuit Divided—William Pearson—Hugh Hughes—Cowbridge—Llantrisant—Bridgend—Robert Price—Davies of Maesmawr—T. R. Guest—W. Price—J. Williams—B. Wright—New Circuits.

FOR rather more than half a century Mr. Wesley exercised the most careful oversight and judicious control over the Societies in and about Cardiff. He received the first members to form the first Society in the town, appointed the first officers, directed the erection and conducted the opening services of the first chapel, stationed the first ministers and their successors likewise up to the time of his death, and frequently and regularly visited the place.

The first name mentioned in connection with the Cardiff Society is that of Captain Phillips, who went to Bristol to remind Mr. Charles Wesley of his promise to visit the town, offering to take him back in his boat. The first Society met in this devoted man's house, where they were assembled on the night when the sword was taken from the player, and an apparent defeat turned into a glorious victory.

Thomas Glascot was probably the first officer. He was the host of Charles Wesley on his first visit to Cardiff, was present at the Conference held in Bristol in 1746; a man of considerable local influence, and said by Mr. Wesley to be one of the excellent of the earth. F. Farley was another



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worthy lovable man, who defended Mr. Charles Wesley when the doctor and player attempted to abuse him. The Rev. Mr. Wells, Vicar of St. Andrews, who invited Mr. Charles Wesley to preach in his church, stood by and defended him when persecuted, and in every possible way rendered him assistance; the Rev. John Hodges, Rector of Wenvoe, who attended the Conference, and was for years a most devoted supporter of Wesleyanism; and Mrs. Captain Phillips, are all referred to as greatly beloved; as also Arthur Price, Anne Jenkins, Jane Haswell, and Nancy Newell, 'faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ,' who, in Wesley's day, 'had passed within the veil.' Mr. and Mrs. Jones of Fonmon Castle were most devout Methodists as long as they lived. Mrs. Jones joined the Society on Friday, July 17, 1741, and Mr. Jones almost immediately after; for in the following September we find him on his way to Bristol with Charles Wesley, in order that he might see for himself the work of God in that city, and where he stood up and bare testimony to the marvellous work of the Spirit of God which he had himself experienced. The next time Mr. Wesley refers to him, he describes him as 'pressing on to the fulness of God.' During the short period he lived, he was very active, never losing an opportunity of hearing Mr. Wesley preach, and assisting both the brothers in carrying on their work. That he bore testimony before the Kingswood colliers is certain, but whether he had begun to preach is not known. In all probability, if his valuable life had been spared, he would have assisted in establishing Societies, and carrying on the work of God generally, throughout various parts of the country. For nearly fifty years Mrs. Jones was a most faithful, generous, and devoted Methodist. Her residence—Fonmon Castle—was converted into a sanctuary, to which all classes of people came in large numbers to hear the gospel preached, and many were both convinced of sin and born again within its walls. It became the home of the Methodist

preacher, and both the family and servants dwelt daily in an atmosphere of prayer and praise. Often was the sloop sent across the Bristol Channel, either to meet or to take back the Methodist preacher to Somersetshire. When Charles Wesley was stricken down by illness, he found in this castle a beautiful home and hospital, insomuch that his brother John was afraid that the beauty of the neighbourhood, the harmony of the home, and the kindness of its inmates would melt him down completely. When defections took place among several clergymen and others who had been very prominent in Methodism, Mrs. Jones stood firmly, and went about with other godly women to the meetings held in various parts of the country, and standing by the Wesleys in the open air. She went with Charles Wesley to Cowbridge the first time he preached there, and stood by his side, fearless of the threats of the mob, who had showered stones on John Wesley upon his first visit to the town, and actually prevented him from preaching. Her husband was suddenly called away from her when they were both young, and the resignation she then displayed, as also through a painful and protracted affliction, together with the profound peace she possessed and her glorious victory in death, mark her out as one of the most exemplary Christians connected with the early Methodist Church in any part of the country.

Another very remarkable man raised up by God in the neighbourhood was Harri Llwyd (Henry Lloyd) of Rhydri, not far from Rupera Castle, and about two or three miles from Caerphilly. Mr. Atmore, in his *Lives of Early Methodist Preachers*, refers to him as ‘an honest, good, godly man.’ He was the first local preacher able to preach in the vernacular. He began to preach in the year 1746, and it is said that he literally wore out his constitution by his incessant travels throughout the various villages and towns in the neighbourhood and in the adjacent counties. He was not a man of great learning or of conspicuous ability or

genius, but his zeal, untiring energy, and devotion to the cause of God were fully demonstrated during the fifty-three years that he laboured as a local preacher. It is more than probable that he often accompanied Mr. Wesley in order to translate his sermons to the people. On April 6, 1749, on the summit of a very high mountain (probably Llanwno), where scarcely a house could be seen, a large crowd of people were assembled to hear Mr. Wesley preach, and Harri Llwyd was the interpreter. As he conveyed the appeals of the great preacher to the people in their native language, their consciences were touched so keenly, and effects were so visible, as to amply repay him for the effort in climbing the mountain. Mr. Wesley's 'Sermon on the Death of George Whitefield, with Choice Extracts from the Great Orator's Diary,' was translated and published by him, and printed by Rhys Thomas of Cowbridge in 1771. The Rev. John Hughes (1st), himself a native of Brecon, and contemporary with Mr. Wesley and Dr. Coke, mentions in his *Horæ Britannicæ* that Harri Llwyd accompanied Charles Wesley on his first visit to Brecon, and that he probably preached in the vernacular, or interpreted for Charles Wesley, and that they were the honoured instruments in the introduction of Methodism into that town. (It is doubtful, though, whether this is correct, it being more likely that John Wesley formed the Society at Brecon.) On one occasion, while on a preaching tour in Cornwall, he was surrounded by a reckless, riotous crowd of miners, who were determined to put him to death. Just as the mob were about to seize the poor preacher, he began to pray in the Welsh language with such marvellous power that the disturbers were frightened and immediately retired, fearing that the spirit of the gods had descended upon him, and that in their own interest they had better leave the Methodist preacher to himself. From that time he was allowed to pursue his mission unmolested. He died in great peace in 1799, after serving his church and country with great

diligence and fidelity as a preacher of the gospel for fifty-three years.

Timothy Thomas of Llanharri, but afterwards of Cardiff, was another local preacher who, like Harri Llwyd, preached in both languages, and laboured incessantly with great zeal and success. His son Timothy, a great reader, became a great linguist, and a man looked up to by the inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood generally. He was the Samuel Drew of those days, and, like his father, was also a very able preacher of the gospel.

In Cardiff at that time there was only one Methodist Society, which included Welsh and English. The services were chiefly conducted in English, except when one of the above bi-linguists preached in Welsh. Welsh was the language of the people, and the disadvantage of holding exclusively English services was a great hindrance to the growth of Methodism in those days.

The Glamorganshire Circuit, which extended from Chepstow in the east to Llanelli, Carmarthenshire, in the west, was regularly included in the list of Circuits with one or more ministers after 1765. In that year Martin Rodda was the only minister appointed. In 1796 the Circuit was divided, Cardiff being the head of the easterly side of Glamorgan and the county of Monmouth, and Swansea head of the westerly side with portions of Carmarthenshire. Caleb Simmons and John Hughes were the ministers appointed to Cardiff. A Mr. Cole of Swansea wrote to the authorities complaining that Methodism in South Wales could not make progress unless they could secure the services of ministers able to preach in the vernacular. In 1795, the year before the division, and after fifty-six years of faithful and devoted service, the Glamorganshire Circuit reported only 290 members of Society. Chapels had been erected by Mr. Wesley himself at Cardiff, Chepstow, Cowbridge, Bridgend, and probably other places in the Circuit; and the names of John and

Charles Wesley were in some of the chapel deeds. They were considered Methodist chapels irrespective of language, the preaching being exclusively English. In the Cardiff Society the majority of the members understood the Welsh language better than the English; so when John Hughes, a bi-lingual preacher, was appointed, new life was infused into the Societies, and the work began to prosper. The following year Cardiff Circuit itself returned 236 members, Swansea 164, while Brecon returned 408. The next year the Cardiff Circuit had three ministers—Cleland Kirkpatrick, Thomas Roberts, M.A., and John Wood. Thomas Roberts was a particular friend of Wesley. He had been stationed at Haverfordwest, where his services had been attended with considerable success, but on losing his wife—a native of Pembrokeshire—his health gave way, and for several years he was appointed to Circuits as an extra preacher. He was one of the few Methodist ministers who had been blessed with private means, and had the great gratification of being the principal agent in the formation of the ‘Annuitant Society.’ He brought the scheme before the preachers at the Bristol Conference of 1798, and offered a donation of £50 to commence the fund. Dr. Adam Clarke and other influential ministers met together, and after much deliberation, in which Mr. Roberts took a leading part, resolutions were passed, rules framed, and Dr. Clarke and himself appointed the first treasurers.¹ These rules were registered as the law required, by its application to the Quarter Sessions held for the city of Bristol, July 15, 1799. It was during the two years Mr. Roberts was stationed in the Cardiff Circuit that this important fund was established, and his interest in it continued unabated to the close of his life, notwithstanding the fact that in his old age he lost the principal part of his property, and experienced the greatest pain in being unable to leave to this fund the bequest which

¹ *Memoir of Rev. Thomas Roberts, M.A.*, pp. 57, 58.

he had previously mentioned in his will. Mr. Roberts was a poet of no mean order, a very successful pamphlet writer, a really able preacher, a man of sound judgment, and in every way worthy of the confidence Mr. Wesley reposed in him.

In the year 1798 John Hughes was appointed the second time to the Cardiff Circuit, after an absence of one year at Haverfordwest. About this time a young man, a native of Builth, who had been brought up a Calvinist, removed to Cardiff from Carmarthen, where he had formed the acquaintance of a young Methodist, who influenced him to join the Society. For some time he was in a strait between accepting Calvinism or Arminianism. He prayed, studied hard, consulted, and finally cast in his lot with the Methodists. Early in the year 1801 he began to exhort, and in 1802 he preached his trial sermon before the Rev. John Sydserff in the city of Llandaff. The following year the young man was accepted for the ministry and appointed to the Welshpool Circuit, and although he did not live a long life, nevertheless during the few years he was in the ministry, Stephen Games did great service in connection with the introduction of Methodism to various parts of North Wales, where he died in great peace in the town of Denbigh, November 14, 1814. He was probably the first minister sent out from Cardiff into the regular ministry. He was a preacher of no mean order, of pleasant address, cultured mind, vivid imagination, kindly disposition, a faithful friend, and a devout Christian.

A most important epoch in the history of Methodism in Cardiff was the appointment to the Circuit of a Welsh home missionary in the year 1805. There were many connected with the Society who could use the Welsh language so much better than the English, that when the Rev. Griffith Owen was sent to introduce Methodism through the Welsh language, the appointment was hailed with considerable satisfaction. Welsh Methodism—which was introduced, as referred to under

the chapter on the county of Denbigh, in 1800—had made wonderful strides ; Societies were established, and men raised up phenomenally to mission other parts of the Principality. This was Griffith Owen's first appointment, and although he remained for one year only, he did a great work in the Circuit, acting under the direction of the Rev. John Watson, who was then the superintendent. He was a native of Carnarvonshire, brought up under the influence of Calvinism, which he renounced for Wesleyan Methodism, and became a popular preacher ; striking and effective in both manner and matter, and was in every way well fitted for his position. The following year four ministers were appointed to the Cardiff Circuit, viz.—John Watson, Edward Higgins, James Spink, and William Evans, the two latter being new on the ground. William Evans was a minister of exceptional ability who had travelled one year. He was a native of Carnarvon, and converted to God when about twenty-four years of age. The agony of soul which he experienced when under the conviction of sin was so intense that his physical constitution was severely shaken, and this prostration being followed by fever, his life was in jeopardy for some time. Immediately after his restoration to health he came out boldly on the Lord's side, and cast his lot with the Wesleyan Methodists. He soon began to take part in the meetings, and so great was his power in prayer that many would invite their friends to accompany them to hear William Evans pray. His ministerial life was a very useful one. He was an able exponent of the word of God, and with great success, through means of both the pulpit and the press, he defended the doctrines of Methodism from attacks made by able and leading men of other religious bodies. His sons—the late Mr. Thomas Evans of Swansea, the late Mr. S. Evans of Bath, and Mr. A. Evans of Machynlleth—and his daughters—Mrs. Owen (wife of Mr. Owen Owen, the father of the present M.P. for Launceston, and Mr. Owen of Liverpool) and Mrs. Robinson (the wife of the Rev. E. J. Robinson), still

well known and generous Methodists—are worthy representatives of this devoted minister. In 1806 Mr. Evans took up the work commenced by the Rev. Griffith Owen, and at the end of a year he had Societies at Cardiff, Caerphilly, Ely, Llysfaen, Machen, Llantrisant, and Bridgend, all in a fairly prosperous state.

In 1808 the Cardiff Circuit was divided, Monmouth becoming the head of the east side of Monmouthshire; and the Welsh Societies, with Caerphilly (for the first four years) at the head, of the new Welsh Circuit; while Cardiff remained as before the head of the English Circuit. In 1812 Cardiff became the head of the Welsh Circuit, an arrangement which was totally unsatisfactory, inasmuch as the Welsh and English worshipped in the same chapels notwithstanding that they were in different Circuits. Neither Welsh nor English were satisfied, for if the Welsh had not vacated the chapel at the exact time, the English friends would complain, and if the English services were prolonged so as to keep the Welsh waiting, it became their turn to murmur discontent. It has ever been found almost impossible to arrange such services in Nonconformist chapels in the Principality, although the Church of England succeed in doing so all over the country. The Welsh Societies were making far greater progress than the English, and in this year of amalgamation there were four ministers appointed who were able to preach in both languages, and John Hughes, who had travelled the Circuit in 1796 and again in 1798, was appointed superintendent. This arrangement also failed to give satisfaction, many left the Societies, the membership of the Welsh Societies declining very considerably. In 1814 the Rev. James Dixon—afterwards Dr. Dixon, and President of the Conference in 1841—became the superintendent of the Circuit, having as colleagues two very popular Welshmen, the Revs. Griffith Hughes and David Jones, both of whom were several years his senior. Mr. Dixon only remained one year in the Circuit. The Circuits

were again divided in 1817 into Cardiff Welsh and Cardiff English, with the Rev. Hugh Hughes and George Birley their respective superintendents. These two ministers and their families became devotedly attached to each other, and the scene when they were called upon to part was most affecting. Both Circuits from this time gradually improved year after year. It was evident that the hearty co-operation and brotherliness which existed between the ministers drew the Methodist people to confide more heartily in each other, and thus secure better results. The Welsh Circuit reported an increased membership every year for many years. They were better able to reach the masses, and they also commanded better preachers. The Rev. William Pearson's appointment to the Cardiff English Circuit in 1827 was one of the most successful ever made. An old Cardiffian, who at that period attended the chapel, but soon afterwards left the denomination, informed me that 'Mr. Pearson was a powerful and eloquent preacher, and a terror to evil-doers.' He was often heard earnestly enforcing 'the terrors of the Lord,' the consequences of sin, and the danger of eternal destruction. The theatre he was accustomed to designate as 'the Gates of Hell.' He was withal a most devoted Christian character, 'instant in season and out of season.' Passing a working man whom he knew, who was in the act of rolling, he shouted out, 'That's right, Brother Trump; roll and pray—roll and pray.'

Being possessed of private means, from which he distributed largely to the necessities of the poor generally, Mr. Pearson soon became a favourite throughout the town of Cardiff. The old chapel in Church Street became too small and inconvenient, and a much larger one was erected on the same site. This building has since been converted into two shops, but the stone bearing the date 1829 on the front elevation is still visible.

Mr. Pearson retired from full work at the end of his three years' term at Cardiff, but settled down there as a super-

numerary, and continued to be ‘a burning and a shining light,’ preaching, meeting classes, and visiting the sick of all denominations—a work in which he took special delight for more than fifteen years. When the end came he was found ‘in perfect peace’ waiting the ‘will of God,’ and ‘in the triumph of faith’ and ‘assurance of hope,’ on Sunday, February 22, 1846, in the seventy-eighth year of his age, he passed away to be for ever with the Lord. His long residence in Cardiff, his lively and energetic preaching, his beautiful character, boundless charity, indomitable zeal, and unwearied diligence, contributed largely towards making Wesleyan Methodism attractive to the inhabitants generally. He was practically the founder of the ‘Merciful Society,’ through which, in his last will, he bequeathed £500 to the poor.

In his obituary, as printed in the Minutes of the Conference,¹ it is said :—

‘He was a man of deep piety and active zeal; he walked closely with God, and exhibited in his daily deportment and in the various relations of life the power and efficacy of divine grace. Living faith, fervent prayer, abstraction from the world, love to God, joy in the Holy Ghost, and pure benevolence abounded in him; his was “the path of the just which is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” His preaching was plain, evangelical, practical, exceedingly energetic and useful.’

The year 1828 was one of marked prosperity in both the Welsh and English Circuits. The Welsh Societies had been steadily increasing in number and influence for some years, and chapels had been erected in several places. The old Cowbridge Chapel, erected, and probably paid for, by Mr. Wesley, in which he had preached, and of which he was a trustee, was now used by the Welsh Society in that town. Soon after Mr. Wesley’s death the Society which he had formed there died out, the chapel was closed, and fell into a

¹ Minutes of the Conference, 1846.

more dilapidated state than when used as a smithy. When the Rev. Edward Jones went to Cowbridge for the first time, so utterly ignorant was he of the existence of a chapel in the town, that when he announced himself as one of Mr. Wesley's preachers, and wished to open a preaching-place there, he was asked why he did not preach in Wesley's chapel. He soon discovered the chapel, but the sight was not at all inspiring. There was neither door nor window, yet the missionary was glad of even a dilapidated room, and to find that it was really and truly Methodist property. Fortunately, Dr. Coke paid a visit to Cowbridge while Mr. Jones was there, and arrangements were made to renovate the old chapel, and it became the centre of a good work for many years. Several of those who had been brought to God through the instrumentality of Mr. Wesley and his coadjutors, and who could understand but not converse in or undertake any religious duties requiring the use of the English language, joined the Welsh Society, and so the work prospered.

Mr. Thomas Walters, who was converted during Mr. Wesley's second visit to Cowbridge, and was a faithful member of Society for sixty-nine years; Mr. Edward Williams (Iolo Ffardd Glas), an eminent Welsh bard, and Lawrence Richards, both well known and acceptable local preachers; Mrs. Preece—mother of R. M. Preece, J.P., who removed to Carnarvon, and became a very able and influential local preacher throughout North Wales—and many others might be mentioned as associated with this vigorous Welsh cause. This was the first home which the Welsh Wesleyans had in the southern end of the Principality, and for years there were many influential families devotedly attached to the Cowbridge Society.

The Llantrisant Chapel was erected in 1814, and Mr. Davies of Maesmawr, who took a great interest in it, left an annuity of £30 per annum towards the support of preaching the gospel in that town by Wesleyan preachers. The annuity

is drawn from the Croston Estate, near Llancarvan, and has now to be paid through the Cardiff Circuit, which at that time included all the Welsh and English Societies. The old chapel still stands, although in a very dilapidated condition, but a larger and much better chapel has been erected in another part of the town.

During the same year the Llancarvan Chapel was built, Cadoxton Chapel in the following year, which is still used, and the Caerphilly Chapel in 1816. The chapel at Bridgend, erected by Wesley, and of which also he was a trustee, was at this time used by the Welsh Society, the English Society having died out some years before.

In the year 1828 a very gracious revival of the work of God was experienced throughout both English and Welsh Societies. At a quarterly meeting of the Welsh Circuit at Llantwit Major held on September 24, 1827, the state of the work of God in the Circuit was very carefully and prayerfully considered, and several suggestions were agreed to, having special reference to the better attention and greater devotion to the services of the sanctuary, and from that time Methodism made a decided step in advance. The members of the meeting resolved to urge every one in their respective congregations to stand during singing, and to kneel at prayer. Also, that a day for special thanksgiving and prayer should be set apart, when all members should be asked to join; that a Society meeting be held after every public service; that a pressing invitation be given to all hearers to identify themselves with the Church of Christ; and further, that they should all pray earnestly and regularly for an outpouring of the Holy Ghost. Three months later all the preachers, leaders, and officers of the Circuit assembled in Cardiff for prayer and conversation. Their faith and effort were owned of God, for every Society throughout the Circuit was filled with new life and vigour, and hundreds were led to decision for Christ their Saviour.

The two superintendents—the Revs. Robert Humphreys

and William Pearson—were men of similar aims, equally devoted and intensely in earnest to save sinners. Welsh and English congregations worshipped in the same chapels, although the services were kept separate, which was a great disadvantage undoubtedly, and one which increased proportionately with their successes. The ministers and members were able and willing enough to co-operate together, but they were greatly hampered for want of accommodation. It was ultimately agreed that a place of worship should be built for the Welsh on the old Canal side, which they used until 1838, when they removed to a new chapel in Union Street, which stood on the site of the present building. This chapel was small and not exceedingly attractive, although it became the birthplace of many souls, but it was never a fair representation of Methodism in the town. It would have served the interests of Methodism far better if the Welsh Society had remained in Church Street, and a good chapel similar to Wesley Chapel had been erected ten years earlier for the English Society. It is easier for us, in the light of the experience of the past fifty years, to see the wisdom of such a course than it was for the good old Methodists of those days to anticipate the growth of Methodism with that of the town. That two chapels, one of each section, were necessary will be conceded by all; also, that Welsh Methodism never developed in the town as it should have done, is true. The present chapel, built in 1878, and having the gallery added in 1882, is a fairly good one, and has been better attended than the old one. The transition of the Welsh language, and the limited number of local preachers, left the Welsh Societies for years in a state of decay. Several of the chapels were transferred to English Circuits, becoming more prosperous than ever; and many good families now connected with the English Societies were at one time, either themselves or their parents, joined to the Welsh.

The Cardiff Welsh Circuit held a respectable place among

the Welsh Circuits almost from the beginning. It possessed families whose kindness made the Circuit proverbial for hospitality. David Gravel, who entered the ministry in 1835, and became one of the most attractive preachers and efficient platform speakers in the Welsh ministry, was brought up at Llandaff. He died at the age of forty-eight, April 28, 1857. John Millward, a native of Cadoxton, also entered the ministry in 1836, and in less than two years became one of the most attractive and useful preachers in the Welsh work. Wherever he went people flocked to hear him, but the incessant preaching at all hours, both in chapels and in the open air, soon proved a greater strain than his constitution could bear. He died at Oswestry on January 7, 1838.

John Jones of Llantrisant—better known as Humilis—who, after a term in college, entered the ministry and died at Cardiff in March 1869, was a man of rare intellectual power, marvellous memory, and an author of considerable merit.

James Reynolds of Cowbridge; William Griffiths, Llancarvan; Isaac Price, Rhydri; David Morgan of Cardiff, formerly of Barry; and Thomas Phillips of Mellin Griffith, were local preachers of marked ability. The brothers Lloyd, John Andrew, S. Davies, and J. Richards, and, more recently, Mrs. Thomas, Mr. Phillips, Ynyscedwyn; Thomas Price, Llandough; John Norman, and their families, with Mr. and Mrs. Rees of Park Place, were all well known for their generosity and fidelity to Methodism.

The families of Louger at Llancarvan, Spenser at St. Athan, Jones and Price at Llantwit, and Price of Rhydri, all undertook with great heartiness the duties and responsibilities in the Church of their choice. Mrs. Rees, almost at her sole cost, erected the gallery and presented an organ for the Cardiff Welsh Chapel, and afterwards left a legacy towards its maintenance. Her hospitality, both during the life of

Mr. Joseph Rees and after his death, was rarely equalled and never excelled.

The erection of the new chapel in Church Street in 1829, accompanied as it was by a revival, infused new life into the English Methodist Society in Cardiff. The advent of Mr. Thomas Revel Guest to the town likewise proved a great advantage. He was part proprietor of the Dowlais works, a leading Cardiff banker, and withal a very able local preacher and devout man of God. The Guests opened a bank in Cardiff in 1823, which was first managed by Mr. Dore; also a branch in Merthyr. The year 1825 was one of great commercial depression and consequent failures, which led Mr. T. R. Guest to reside in Cardiff. On the 21st of July 1827 he presided at a missionary meeting in the old chapel in Church Street, and this occasion was afterwards reported as being the starting-point of a new era in connection with Cardiff Methodism. He became very popular as a preacher and philanthropist, and in 1835, after the passing of the Municipal Corporation Act, he had the honour of being elected first Mayor of Cardiff, a position which he filled with great distinction. There were also several very devoted men who just about this time identified themselves with Wesleyan Methodism in Cardiff.

Mr. Brown, an outfitter and a man of position in the town, was an eloquent preacher and a very successful superintendent of the Sunday school.

Mr. Edward Mason, who afterwards removed from the town, was a preacher of considerable promise, as also Mr. Yorath, who supplemented his duties of preaching by holding the offices of steward and class-leader with conspicuous ability and devotion for many years. Mr. Watson, who was elected Mayor in 1844, likewise rendered excellent service as school superintendent and local preacher, and was a zealous Methodist during his whole residence in the town. One of his immediate descendants is now a county magistrate, and

an active worker in connection with the Church of England. Messrs. Lucas and Phillips, too, were prominent men at the time, and able local preachers, as also Alderman Lewis, who twice filled the office of Chief Magistrate of the town, and laid the foundation-stone of Wesley Chapel, towards which he contributed £200. His brother, the Rev. Frederick Lewis, was for some time a successful missionary in New South Wales, but was compelled in 1855 to return to his native town, where he resided as a supernumerary until 1857, when he was called to his reward. Mr. James Thomas, who died July 5, 1856, left a legacy of £100 towards the support of Wesley Chapel, and Davies the Nayler was an excellent class-leader, whose work deserves recognition.

But there were three men who perhaps did more than any other in both founding and establishing Wesleyan Methodism in Cardiff and the neighbourhood, namely, William Price, Benjamin Wright, and John Williams. The latter came to Cardiff from the neighbourhood of Swansea, Wright from Suffolk about the year 1810, and Price was a native of the town. Their devotion was intense, no sacrifice of money or labour was considered too great to expend upon the Church of their choice. They threw themselves heartily into the work of the Tract Society, Merciful Society, Sunday School, Mission Committee, and through their untiring efforts—for they did not believe in working by proxy—the Circuit was made attractive, good ministers were secured, and Cardiff Methodism brought into prominence. They became specialists in the interests of Methodism, for they believed they had one mission to accomplish, and everything henceforth was subordinate to that object. Their business, their families, and every power they possessed were wielded in the interests of the kingdom of Christ. They had strong wills, undaunted faith, and most generous dispositions, and their fidelity in the service of Christ was stronger than life itself. For nearly sixty years William

Price, although at the head of a large and flourishing business, and with heavy family responsibilities, only missed his class meeting about seven times, and each occasion was to be accounted for either by death or absence at the Conference. His contributions to the work of God were princely, and would cause many a millionaire to blush. He held the offices of Sunday-school superintendent, leader of three or four Society classes, Circuit and chapel steward, besides being treasurer to the Foreign Missionary, Tract, Merciful, Bible, and other Societies.

Benjamin Wright, notwithstanding that for years he had lived at Wenvoe, and afterwards at St. Nicholas, was equally devoted, generous, and useful, and John Williams likewise was singularly adapted to work with his colleagues. His thoughtfulness, calmness, and deep-seated convictions led him to be of great service in their counsels, to inspire, check, and regulate them, thereby accomplishing much for Christ. His wife's mother, who was a member in the old chapel, was a woman of great piety. At the close of the Sunday evening service, she would publicly invite members of the congregation to her home, where a prayer-meeting would be held, and these meetings were often made the means of special blessing. In the earlier part of the present century such informal gatherings in private houses for prayer and praise at the close of the Sabbath day were often held, and the friends would disperse to their respective homes with the 'songs of praise' upon their lips. It is highly probable that this custom is referred to by Williams of Pantycelyn in the last stanza of one of his best known English hymns, 'Songs of praise, I will ever give to Thee.' These after-meetings also gave to the Church such active workers as David Miller, David Richards, John Harding, and others.

It may be easily understood that with such men, and amid such stirring scenes, the Wesleyan Society in Church Street became one of the most influential churches in the town.

Many of the leading families attended, among whom were Captain Cory and his family, Mr. Vachel and his family, Mr. Bird, and others previously referred to. It was considered that a better chapel was required, and during the superintendency of the Rev. Charles Tucker, Wesley Chapel was erected in Charles Street in 1850. Notwithstanding the fact that the scheme was a gigantic one for those days, the effort was a brilliant success. The chapel was rapidly filled to overflowing, and it was discovered that if Methodism was to grow, a second chapel must be erected at the Docks ; so six years later the chapel at Loudoun Square was undertaken. The Rev. John Samuel Jones, Thomas Osborne, and John Bond were the ministers then stationed in the Circuit, and the superintendent, besides being specially qualified to guide the work, had a most active and able supporter in his junior colleague, who was the resident minister ; consequently, a considerable inspiration was thrown into the movement. Several leading families living in the neighbourhood had their sympathies at once enlisted, among whom were Mr. Sydney Dan Jenkins, a leading merchant, and Mayor of Cardiff in 1856-57 ; Mr. Alderman Elliott, also Mayor of Cardiff in 1876-77 ; together with Messrs. Scudamore, Hambley, Lucas, Shelfer, Richards, Greaves, James Wood, F. J. Beavan, William Sanders, J. Davies, Carr, Gibbs, Morel, H. Frazer, Smith, Lock, George Morris, Wallis, and others. This second chapel soon became more crowded than the first, and a strong church was soon in full vigour, with Sunday school, Merciful Society, and every other branch of Christian work.

Not only in Cardiff itself did this prosperous state of things exist, the outlying places of the Circuit also caught the same spirit of zeal. At Mellin Griffith, where the Welsh and English worshipped in the same chapel, there were several influential families, one of which attained considerable distinction, that of Mr. Christopher James, who was a devoted Methodist. One of his sons removed to Merthyr

Tydfil, and was for years a zealous worker, and another went to Bristol. The late Lord-Justice James, C. H. James, M.P. for Merthyr Tydfil, Frank James and Dr. James of that town, were grandchildren of the Mellin Griffith Methodist pillar. Mr. and Mrs. Herne, the parents of Mr. James Herne of Canton, and Councillor Edmund Herne; Mrs. Wilcox, the devoted wife of the Rev. Henry Wilcox; and Mrs. Rees of Park Place, were all likewise connected with this Society. The same usage of English and Welsh Wesleyans worshipping in one chapel prevailed at Llantwit, St. Athan, Llantrisant, Llancarvan, Cadoxton, Caerphilly; while the Societies established by Mr. Wesley and the early fathers at Bridgend, Cowbridge, and Fonmon had altogether died out.

In the year 1834 Robert Price, who had been converted at Llantwit Major under the preaching of the Rev. William Pearson, removed to Bridgend about the time he was making his first assays as a local preacher. He was moved by a laudable desire to revive English Methodism in the town, a desire which was strengthened when the discovery was made that there was a large number of inhabitants in the town who did not understand the Welsh language for whom no provision for religious worship was made. He found a relic of the old English Society in a good old woman named Nancy Lewis, who with her aunt and one or two more composed his first congregation. A room near the Town Hall was taken for a short time, after which they removed to one connected with the tanyard, in which the meetings were regularly held, and the services of the Cardiff ministers were secured as frequently as possible. In 1841, under the ministry of the Revs. John Rossell and H. M. Harvard, a most gracious and memorable work of God began. The room soon became too strait, and a chapel was inevitable. In 1842, on July 20, the foundation-stone was laid by Mr. Watkin Morgan of Swansea, one of the most generous and influential laymen in the Welsh work. In the following June the chapel was opened for divine worship,

the preachers on the occasion being the Revs. Dr. Waddy, Dr. Thomas Jones, and J. T. Milner. Robert Price at this time was joined by his brother Philip, who had been converted at Bristol, and henceforth they were one in the labour of establishing Methodism in Bridgend. They gathered around them a number of young men of considerable promise, among whom were Edward John, Charles Bassett, William and John Price, and with such a band of earnest, intelligent, and godly workers, success was inevitable.

The Prices of Llantwit Major came originally from Llannais, where Mr. Wesley formed his third Society in the Principality, of which one of the ancestors of Robert Price was a member, and personally acquainted with Mr. Wesley. From that time some descendants of the family have been closely associated with Methodism. The four brothers, Robert, Philip, William, and John, ultimately all became united to the Bridgend Society, and lived to see it in a very substantial and flourishing condition. The Rev. Thomas Osborne, in his interesting *Memorials of Mr. John Price*, says that the three years he spent in the Bridgend Circuit were the most happy, peaceful, and prosperous of his ministerial life. ‘Never before,’ he writes, ‘had he met with a small number of men on whom rested so fully the moral and financial responsibilities of a Circuit, stronger in their attachment to Methodism, more simple and unselfish in their aims, or more liberal in the things they desired on behalf of the work of God.’

Bridgend was divided from Cardiff, and became the head of a new Circuit in 1848, with the Rev. James Mayer, who was for one year in the undivided Circuit and living at Bridgend, as its first superintendent. The new Circuit included the Cowbridge, Llantwit, and St. Athan Societies. In 1857 the Rev. Thomas Osborne was appointed, and, assisted by the Brothers Price, a vigorous work of extension was begun, and several new places added to the plan. In

the following July a new chapel was opened at Maesteg, the Revs. Robert Rees and Isaac Jenkins conducting the inaugural services. The foundation-stone of this chapel had been laid by Mr. Philip Price, and his brothers had also largely contributed towards the building fund. During that same year services were commenced in a cottage at Aberkenfig, which has since been superseded by a neat little chapel. At St. Athan and Llantwit the work of God was greatly revived, as also at Cowbridge, where a small English chapel was erected, which has again been substituted by a more commodious one, the opening services in 1889 being conducted by the Revs. George Fletcher, George Hack, and the writer. In 1872, Cowbridge, which had been the head of a Welsh Circuit since 1848, included the amalgamated Societies, and henceforth became an English Circuit, and so remains. Under the superintendency of the Rev. John Atkins, whose efforts were nobly sustained by the Circuit steward, Thomas Rees, J.P., first Mayor of Cowbridge; T. Parsons, W. Griffiths, Mrs. Cullerwell Llewellyn, and others, Cowbridge Methodism was placed on a sound basis, and, with the probable development of the neighbourhood, it will become a greater power for good.

The formation of the Bridgend Circuit gave the Cardiff Methodists an opportunity of extending their work of evangelization to Pontypridd. Welsh Methodism had been introduced into Treforest by some of the earliest Welsh preachers, and for many years a small Society was kept alive, but eventually it was given up, and an English Society was formed. Mr. Charles Bassett, one of the band of young men brought to God at Bridgend, removed thence and settled at Pontypridd, and became a great help to Methodism in the town and throughout the Rhondda Valley. The Pontypridd and Treforest Wesleyans then worshipped in a farmhouse, but soon afterwards removed to a room which Mr. Bassett provided adjoining his own house, where he conducted a

weekly class-meeting and preaching services were stately held. In 1848 a good chapel—which was enlarged in 1863—took the place of the room, and a number of good men united in Christian fellowship. Mr. Bassett, being one of the leading bankers of the town, as well as a most generous and loyal Methodist, was specially qualified for financing schemes for the erection of chapels, and in Porth, Pandy, Pentre, Heolbach, Ferndale, Williams Town, Treorky, Llantrisant, and Havod, in conjunction with the superintendent minister for the time being, he was successful in such undertakings. In the alterations at several other chapels he took a lion's share of both work and responsibility. The time, thought, and money which he bestowed upon Methodism cannot fail to produce a rich harvest to his credit in years yet to come.

In 1862, Pontypridd became the head of a Circuit, with the Rev. James Greenland as sole minister. Two years later an additional minister was appointed, and the Rhondda Valley began to attract attention, although the population was small. From that period the increase in the population has been quite phenomenal; and although Methodism has grown considerably, she has not kept pace with the population. About the year 1871, Mr. Lewis Davis and his family settled at Ferndale, and became the nucleus of an English Society, in connection with which they cheerfully undertook financial responsibility. A commodious chapel was erected, and a minister located there. In 1886 the Pontypridd Circuit was divided into three; Ferndale and Rhondda becoming the respective heads of the new Circuits. Sometimes the wisdom of division is strongly questioned, but in this case it is beyond contradiction that the three Circuits have considerably improved as compared with their condition previous to 1886. New Societies have been formed at Ynysybwl in the Pontypridd Circuit, Clydach Vale and Blaenycwm in the Rhondda, and Ynyshir and Mardy in the Ferndale Circuit. The remarkably rapid development of the coal trade in the Welsh

valleys brought a large new population into the Bridgend Circuit, and new chapels sprang up at Tynewydd, Pontycymer, Blackmill, Bryncoch, and Cefn. At Tondu a new chapel was built and presented to the Connexion by the Messrs. Brogden, at that time proprietors of the works in that neighbourhood ; and the generosity of these considerate merchants, backed up by the devotion of the Brothers Price, and still more recently by that of Mr. Hugh Bevan, whose unbounded zeal, generosity, and enthusiasm are well known in all the churches, and of Messrs. Blackmore and Gardiner, has placed the Methodist Societies and Trusts, not only of Tondu but throughout the entire Circuit, upon a solid foundation.

The success which attended the efforts at Bridgend, Pontypridd, and other places outside and round about Cardiff, awoke fresh interest in the heart of the town Methodists, and determined them upon an aggressive policy. Small chapels had been erected at Cathays, Canton, Cadoxton, and Penarth. Roath was growing into a fine residential suburb, and Canton also was developing, and small mission chapels neither satisfied the tastes or judgment of the large-hearted and enthusiastic Methodists of Cardiff. The Circuit was divided into two, Loudoun Square becoming the head of the new Circuit. Canton Chapel, a beautiful structure on a magnificent site in Conway Road, was opened, but was thought by many to be situated too far out of the town, a defect since partially rectified by the erection of a chapel at Riverside. The generosity of Mr. Lewis Davis, J.P., at that time a resident in the neighbourhood, and who promised £700 ; the untiring zeal of Mr. Benjamin Wright, and the assiduous care of Alderman Sanders, with Messrs. James Hern, Samuel Hallett, and others, were crowned with success in the opening of this attractive sanctuary in 1869. Recently this building has been supplemented by the erection of commodious schools on the most modern principles, so that the property at this date stands second to none in the whole neighbourhood. No

chapel in the town has a brighter prospect, and the church and congregation are most interesting and prosperous.

The Roath Chapel, which was erected in 1871, with magnificent schools, class-rooms, church parlour, etc., at a cost of £14,000, is unequalled in the Principality, and from the first has been a great success. It was built during the ministry of the Rev. D. C. Ingram, and its present position and prosperity are largely due to the generosity and untiring devotion of two well-known and highly esteemed Methodists, men who occupy the highest social position, Messrs. E. R. Moxey and Lewis Williams, supported by other worthy and self-denying men.

Penarth, Arcot Street, Broadway, and Cathays are three large chapels, equally attractive, commodious, and successful, possessed of fine school premises, and each having a number of generous families, of workers devoted to various institutions in vigorous work. Besides the commodious school chapels in various parts of the town, Riverside, Splot Road, and Grangetown, with their rapidly growing populations, are looking forward to the erection of large chapels equal to any already in existence; and under skilful piloting, together with the hearty support of the laity, these schemes may be carried successfully through, and much more accomplished in the way of Methodist extension.

The old Cardiff Circuit of fifty years ago, worked by two ministers, the Revs. Charles Tucker and John S. Workman, with a membership of 390, and having a grant from the Home Mission Fund of £51, has grown into eight Circuits, with a church membership—including those on trial—of over five thousand, worked by twenty ministers, by a band of two hundred local preachers, a strong band of Sunday-school teachers, class-leaders, and tract distributors, who, for ability and enthusiasm, are unsurpassed in any other Church. There are now over sixty chapels covering the same area, most of which are in a flourishing condition, and Cardiff

itself is the head of a strong and flourishing district, possessing a large number of families of intelligence, wealth, and ability, capable of immense service in the cause of Christ and Methodism. Methodists of to-day are highly privileged, but they need to be sensibly impressed that privilege involves responsibility, and so impressed as to cheerfully and heartily bear their burden. Many of the Cardiff Methodists are growing wealthy. Wealth brings noble opportunities, and competence is a legitimate object of pursuit, but both may be obtained at too high a price. The generosity of Methodists in Cardiff has been one essential feature of success in the past. Those who laboured so persistently and prosperously in establishing Methodism in the town, found their pleasure in doing good to others, assisting the poor, sympathising with the distressed, and having prospered in their business, they gave correspondingly with the growth of their income. They revelled in ‘plain living and high thinking,’ and ‘the homely beauty of the good old cause,’ with pure religion breathing in their households. They thought, they lived, they worked, they died in the interests of the work of God and of Methodism. They longed for more purity in order to live well; they toiled hard in order to give well; and in all their living, working, thinking, and giving were prompted by an inward power which aimed at the glory of God. They felt that they were born to do benefits. ‘They were truly great, because great in charity,’ and if the mantles of William Price, Benjamin Wright, and John Williams fall on Cardiff Methodists, their Church will ever grow in beauty, verdure, and strength.

CHAPTER X.

METHODISM IN BRECONSHIRE.

Brecon—Garth—Builth—Marmaduke Gwynne—Phillips of Maesmynys—Charles Wesley's Marriage—Great Meeting at Trevecca—Howell Harris—Benson Fletcher—John Prickard—John' Church—Hugh Bold—Walter Churchey—Thomas Taylor—Calvinism—Dr. Coke—Methodists and the Chapel—The Welsh Chapel—David Rogers—The Struet—Bailie—Hay—Defynog—Pwllgloew—Lion Street—Amalgamation.

ADOPTING the order of succession, the county of Brecon was the next visited by Mr. Wesley. On Wednesday, May 4, 1743, at the cordial invitation of the Rev. Mr. Phillips, the Rector of Maesmynys, about two miles from Builth, the founder of Methodism first preached the gospel of free grace in this county. He left Bristol on the previous day, and travelled *via* Abergavenny as far as Bwll or Bwlch, situate five miles beyond Abergavenny, where he stayed the night. No reference is made to any service being held on that day, although it is very probable that the great evangelist preached at Bwlch or somewhere in the immediate neighbourhood. ‘The next morning,’ he says, ‘we came to Builth, just as the Church prayers began. Mr. Phillips soon took knowledge of me, and we began a friendship which I trust shall never end. I preached on a tomb at the east end of the church at four, and again at seven. Mr. Gwynne and Mr. Prothero (Justices of the Peace) stood on either hand of me, and all the people before, catching every word, with the most serious and eager attention.’

This was one of the most interesting and satisfactory receptions which Mr. Wesley received in any part of the

country. The rector of the parish invited him, opened his church to him, stood by him, sympathised with him in his great work, and assisted him by interpreting his words; two magistrates also, leading county gentlemen, stand one on either side of the preacher, like Aaron and Hur, to hold up his arms, to defend and protect him, to receive his words and to offer him hospitality; and an eager crowd surrounds him, intently desirous to catch every word as it falls from his lips. Here, heaven and earth, Church, State, and common people, vie with each other in encouraging the gospel messenger. His stay in the county was but of short duration, he having to return to Cardiff the next day to preach at the opening services of the new chapel.

The reception which he received on this first visit was so satisfactory that Mr. Wesley in the following September visited the county a second time. Leaving Bristol on Monday the 26th, he travelled through Caerleon, where he met with a plain young man, to whom he spoke about his soul. The young man was melted into tears, as was also the landlord and his wife, where for a short time he rested his horse and partook of refreshment himself. He went on that evening to Crughowell, and the next morning to Garth, the home of Mr. Gwynne. This home reminded him of the comforts, charms, and the loving welcome which he had received at Fonmon Castle, and the early death of his highly esteemed friend and admirer, Mr. Jones, who had recently passed within the veil. ‘Having so little time to stay,’ he says, ‘I had none to lose;’ so he read prayers, and preached to a small congregation on the ‘faith’ which is ‘counted to us for righteousness,’ and set off for Cardiff.

In April 1744 he again visited Garth. Arriving there on Saturday the 21st, he preached in the church morning and afternoon, and probably in the Garth house in the evening. The next day at Maesmynys Church and afterwards in the Builth churchyard. ‘I observed only one man with his hat

on,' says Mr. Wesley, 'probably through inattention; for he likewise kneeled down on the grass with the rest as soon as I began to pray.' He preached at Maesmynys Church again the following day, after which he went on to Landan (Llanddwy) Church, near Brecon, where he preached in the afternoon. This church was the most dilapidated he had ever seen. 'There was not a glass window belonging to it; but only boards, with holes bored here and there, through which a dim light glimmered in. Yet even here may the light of God's countenance shine. And it has shone on many hearts.' Souls were brought out of darkness into the marvellous light of God.

Leaving the neighbourhood of Cardiff on Monday, August 22, 1745, he proceeded to Garth. The night, however, overtook him before he reached his home, and, having got out of the road, he was in danger of being out all night, but fortunately some kind-hearted gentleman whom he met went out of his way, and led him, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, safely to Garth.

The next day he preached at Maesmynys 'to a larger congregation than the church could contain,' and the same afternoon at Builth. 'There were five clergymen present, two Justices of the Peace, and well-nigh all the grown people in the town. I had not known so solemn a season before, since we came into Wales.' This visit to Wales was one of exceptional blessing, and on his return to Bristol he expressed his devout thankfulness to God.

On Tuesday, August 12, 1746, he preached at Maesmynys and Builth to very large congregations, and on the Wednesday at Llansantffraid. At the latter place, 'as soon as we came out of church,' says Mr. Wesley, 'a poor woman met us, whom Satan had bound in an uncommon manner for several years. She followed us to the house where our horses were, weeping and rejoicing and praising God. Two clergymen were there besides me, and the house was full of people; but

she could not refrain from declaring before them all what God had done for her soul. And the words which came from the heart went to the heart. I scarce ever heard such a preacher before. All were in tears round about her, high and low ; for there was no resisting the Spirit by which she spoke.

'The odd account she gave of herself was this (concerning which let every one judge as he pleases): That near seven years since she affronted one of her neighbours, who thereupon went to Francis Morgan (a man famous in those parts), and gave him fourteen shillings to do his worst for her ; that the next night, as soon as she was in bed, there was a sudden storm of thunder, lightning, and rain, in the midst of which she felt all her flesh shudder, and knew the devil was close to her ; that at the same time a horse she had in the stable below, which used to be as quiet as a lamb, leaped to and fro, and tore in such a manner that she was forced to get up and turn him out ; that a tree which grew at the end of the house was torn up by the roots ; that from thenceforth she had no rest day or night, being not only in fear and horror of mind, but in the utmost torment of body, feeling as if her flesh was tearing off with burning pincers ; that till this day she had never had any respite or ease ; but now she knew God had delivered her, and she believed He would still deliver her body and soul, and bruise Satan under her feet.'

The afternoon of the same day he preached again at Builth, returning to Llansantffraid for the night. He proceeded the next day to Leominster, where he began preaching on a tombstone, but 'the multitude roared on every side.' They rang the bells, played the organ, and did all they could to prevent Mr. Wesley from being heard. The preacher then removed to the Corn Market, whither the crowd followed, and here he had a quiet time. 'A Quaker followed me in,' says Mr. Wesley, 'and told me, "I was much displeased with thee because of thy last 'appeal' ; but my displeasure is gone : I heard thee speak, and my heart clave to thee."'

The next day he came to Kington, and ‘preached at one end of the town. The congregation divided itself into two parts. One half stood near, the other part remained a little way off, and loured defiance; but the bridle from above was in their mouth, so they made no disturbance at all.’

At four he had another kind of congregation at Maesmynys, where ‘the people had drank largely of the grace of God,’ and the word was as a two-edged sword. He spent this night with honest John Price of Mertha, returning the next day to the Vale of Glamorgan.

On his way to Ireland, Mr. Wesley called and preached at Builth on Tuesday, August 4, 1747; and on his return journey to Bristol, on Saturday the 29th, he preached again at three in the main street, probably in the Fair or on a market-day, and in the evening at Garth. Here he met with his brother Charles, who was *en route* for Ireland, and who remained in the neighbourhood for about a week. Charles preached at Builth at nine the next morning. In the afternoon they went to Maesmynys, but in consequence of the greatness of the crowd, which could not enter the church, Mr. Wesley preached in the churchyard, as also in the evening, for the same reason, he stood on a tombstone under a shady tree at Llansantffraid.

Mr. Charles Wesley preached also at Llandrindod and other places in the neighbourhood; in some instances Williams, Pantycelyn, accompanied him, preaching in Welsh.

On Monday the 31st, at the earnest request of one who had heard him on Sunday, and with the promise that the pulpit would be at his service, he went to Clyro, but when Mr. Wesley reached the place, the clergyman’s heart had failed him, and the Methodist founder preached Christ to a multitude of people ‘on a large smooth meadow.’ A part of the next day he spent in Crughowell.

Mr. Wesley came to the town of Brecon for the first time on Wednesday, February 17, 1748. The day’s journey was

a remarkable one, and showed the determination of the preacher to conquer all difficulties. The untrodden snow lay thick upon the ground as he set off before daybreak from Chepstow. He reached Abergavenny in four or five hours, Brecon before three in the afternoon, and went forward so as to be in time to conduct a service at Builth in the evening. No reference is made to a service being held at Brecon on this visit, yet we can scarcely imagine such an active worker failing in this respect, after going several miles out of his way, and through deep snow, in order to reach the county town. He remained in the neighbourhood of Garth until the following Tuesday morning, preaching several times at Garth, Builth, and Maesmynys ; also at Llansantffraid.

At Builth, ‘more than all the town had gathered together in that pleasant vale, and made the woods and mountains echo while they sung,

“Ye mountains and vales, in praises abound ;
Ye hills and ye dales, continue the sound ;
Break forth into singing, ye trees of the wood ;
For Jesus is bringing lost sinners to God”—

the singing of which greatly impressed Mr. Wesley. He waited four days in the neighbourhood in consequence of the heavy fall of snow, but on Monday the 22nd started off for Llanidloes, where he preached about noon, and then pressed on *via* Machynlleth, Carnarvon, and Holyhead for Ireland. Returning the following May he came to Builth on the 21st. Pressed by his friend Mr. Phillips, he went on to Garth, where he preached that evening and the next morning, and afterwards at Maesmynys, Builth, and at Mertha, where he remained during the night at the home of Mr. John Price.

Mr. Charles Wesley, returning from Ireland tired, sick, faint, having failed several times on the way, came to Garth on Friday, March 25, 1748, where he remained in great pain, and confined to his room for some days. Being attended to with great care, he was able during the last few days’

sojourn to read prayers, administer the Sacrament, and join in the services. Although still weak, on the 5th of April, accompanied by Mr. Gwynne and Miss Sally a part of the way, he returned to London.

In July of the same year, in company with Mr. Gwynne and his daughter, Mr. Charles Wesley left London again, reaching Garth on Monday, August 1. During the journey he was thrown from his horse, but was unhurt, proving the promise of God to be beautifully fulfilled, ‘He shall give His angels charge over thee.’ On the Wednesday he preached at the Assembly Rooms at the Wells, probably Llanwrtyd, to gentry, clergy, and others. His preaching was greatly owned of God during this visit, especially at Maesmynys. On his return from Ireland on the 13th of October, Mr. Charles Wesley reached Garth, where, prolonging his stay for a week, he preached several times, as also at Builth, Maesmynys, and Llansantffraid, where Williams, Pantycelyn, again joined him, and took part in the service. At Maesmynys all were melted down in prayer: it was a season of great grace to all present.

On the 1st of December 1748, Mr. Charles Wesley, in company with Mr. James, travelled amid many difficulties to Brecon, and the following day to Garth, where he was affectionately received by all, and especially by Mrs. Gwynne. Mr. Charles Wesley, after consultation with his brother and much prayer, had come to Garth, this time on other important business. He took counsel with Sally how to proceed, and she advised him to write to her mother. While the family was at dinner together with Miss Betsy, Molly Leyshon, B. Williams, and faithful Grace Bowen, he spent a comfortable hour in prayer. In the evening he preached at Garth. The next day being Sunday, he preached at Maesmynys, Builth, and Garth. On the following day he approached the mother, who said she would rather give her child to Mr. Wesley than to any man in England. It was, however, thought necessary that he should be able to find £100 a year, which his brother and

Mr. Blackwell proposed should be paid out of the profits of their publications. Mr. Phillips was at first very unwilling to agree to this arrangement, and remonstrated with Mr. Wesley; but eventually his objections were overcome. On February 17, 1749, John and Charles Wesley came together to Garth. Mr. John Wesley settled the £100 per annum on his brother, and appointed Mr. Gwynne and Mr. Perronet trustees. On the Sunday Mr. Charles preached at Maesmynys, and Mr. John Wesley at Builth and Garth, and again on the following day. Charles remained in the neighbourhood for a week after his brother had left, preaching in the adjacent villages and towns twice a day.

On April 6, 1749, the brothers visited Brecon again, where they probably conducted a service. Early next morning they set off for Garth, where they spent the day in making all necessary arrangements for the marriage, which was to take place on the morrow. ‘We crowded as much prayer as we could into the day,’ writes Charles. The record of the wedding-day is very interesting.

‘Saturday, 8th,’ writes Mr. Wesley, ‘I married my brother and Sarah Gwynne. It was a solemn day, such as became the dignity of a Christian marriage.’

‘Sweet day ! so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky.’

‘Not a cloud was seen from morning till night,’ wrote Charles. ‘I rose at four, spent three hours and a half in prayer or singing with my brother, with Sally, or with Beck. At eight I led my Sally to church. Mr. Gwynne gave her to me under God; my brother joined our hands. It was a most solemn season of love. Never had I more of the Divine Presence at the Sacrament. After the singing of a hymn, he (John) then prayed over us in strong faith. We walked back to the house, and joined again in prayer. Prayer and thanksgiving was our whole employment. We were cheerful without mirth, serious without sadness. A stranger that

intermeddleth not with our joy said, “it looked more like a funeral than a wedding.” My brother seemed the happiest person among us.’ On the Sunday Mr. Wesley preached, and all the family partook of the Lord’s Supper, and they were greatly refreshed in their souls. At four the next morning Mr. Wesley left for Ireland. ‘I passed the day in prayer,’ says his brother Charles, ‘and in the evening explained the happiness of true religion.’ He prolonged his stay for twelve days, preaching daily at Garth, Builth, Maesmynys, Llansantffraid, and other places. At Builth all the hearers were in tears. ‘The Lord was never more with me,’ said the poet of Methodism.

On the 21st of April he cheerfully left his partner and the family for the Master’s work, with the words, ‘Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life,’ as his parting prayer.

Marmaduke Gwynne of Garth had been a zealous Methodist for years. He stood by John Wesley’s side in the open air on his first visit to the neighbourhood ; he was present at the second Conference held at Bristol in 1745 ; he entertained the preachers at his opulent mansion, which, says Dr. Stevens, ‘usually comprised, besides his nine children and twenty servants, a chaplain and from ten to fifteen guests.’ Here the Wesleys had frequently preached, and always received a loving sympathetic welcome. Mr. Gwynne had gone with the Riot Act in his pocket to put a stop to Howell Harris preaching at Llanwrtyd, but like a sensible man heard him first, and was so favourably impressed with his preaching that he went up to the preacher, grasped his hand, besought his pardon, bade him God-speed, and invited him to Garth to supper. Mrs. Gwynne was an heiress of £30,000, and no family name in the annals of the county is more honourably represented than that of the Gwynnes. They have time after time won the highest distinctions the county could confer upon them ; but notwithstanding that he was nothing higher than a Methodist preacher, by becoming the wife of Charles

Wesley, Sarah Gwynne did more to immortalize the family than was done by the combined excellences of all the other members of the family. Mrs. Charles Wesley's long life was an unbroken scene of devoted piety in its loveliest forms, and her death equally calm and beautiful. She died on December 28, 1822, at the age of ninety-six.¹

Mr. John Wesley came to Brecon from Aberdare on Tuesday, March 21, 1750, through very rough weather. His mare fell twice and threw him over her head, but without hurt to man or beast. The great evangelist was accompanied by Christopher Hopper. They spent the night in the county town, and probably conducted one or more services that evening, and possibly the next morning, after which they rode to Builth, where a large congregation had assembled to hear Howell Harris, who, however, had failed to be present. Mr. Wesley and his colleague preached, and in the afternoon, in company with Mr. Phillips, he set out for Rhayadr, *en route* for Ireland.

On Thursday, March 18, 1756, he again made his way to Brecon, through hard rain, and preached in the Town Hall to a large congregation. On the Friday he reached Trevecca, and was greatly concerned to find his old friend Howell Harris unable to preach, but was profoundly impressed with the interpositions of Divine Providence in connection with the Orphan House which he had established there. Saturday being the day appointed for the justices and commissioners to meet, the town was extremely full, and large crowds went to hear Mr. Wesley preach—rich and poor—all of whom were attentive and serious. He preached twice on the Sunday. In the afternoon nearly the whole town was present, when God honoured the service with great blessing. In the evening of the day following he journeyed without his guide, who was seriously ill, as far as Builth, where he preached, and thence, in company with Mr. Phillips,

¹ Tyerman, vol. ii. p. 35.

to Rhayadr. It snowed hard behind them, and on both sides of them, but not at all where the travelling preachers were.

Mr. Charles Wesley spent some time in the county in 1754–55. It is, however, much to be regretted that from August 1754 to September 1756 no record of his labours has been found. There are letters in which he refers to his visiting and preaching at Brecon, Garth, Builth, Maesmynys, and other unnamed places. He refers to the death of Mrs. Grace Bowen—Mrs. Wesley's nurse—of whom a fine descriptive character is given in his *Funeral Hymns*. He made an effort to see her alive. ‘I rode hard to see her before her flight,’ he writes, ‘but it is my loss, not hers, that the chariot carried her up last Thursday.

“ ’Tis finished, ’tis done, the spirit is fled,
The prisoner is gone, the Christian is dead,
The Christian is living”—

And we shall live also, when we shall have shook off this body of death, and overtaken our happy friend in paradise.’

Mr. Wesley did not visit Brecon again till 1763, on Tuesday, August 18. Being the Assize week, he could not have the use of the Town Hall, but preached at Mr. James's door, and the next day near the market-place. Then he went on to Trevecca, and was charmed with the elegance of Howell Harris's residence; the little chapel, the gardens, orchards, fish-ponds, and the mount adjoining making the place a little paradise. About six score persons were in the family, all diligent, constantly employed, fearing God and working righteousness. After preaching to a crowded audience, he returned the same evening to Brecon, and preached to the poor only. The rich were otherwise employed, although Mr. Wesley does not mention the character of the business which occupied their attention. The next day he went on to Trecastle, Carmarthen, and Pembroke. He was so charmed with the stretch of country through which he rode, that he describes it as ‘one of the pleasantest in the world,’ and was

bold enough to say that ‘all England did not possess its equal.’

He did not visit Brecon again until Saturday, August 29, 1767. Mr. Wesley then preached to a large congregation of rich people, many of whom seemed almost persuaded to become Christians. John Prickard, who some years after became a travelling preacher, was present on this occasion. Invited by his cousin William Miller, he went to hear Mr. Wesley for the first time. He had often heard the celebrated Whitefield and Howel Davies with pleasure, yet was all the time a stranger to God and his own heart. Under the preaching of a Mr. C—— he had been cut to the heart, but ‘when Mr. Wesley appeared,’ says Mr. Prickard, ‘the first sight I had of him so much affected me that I could not soon forget it. Soon after he stood up and preached from the following words:—“The wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein.” Under this sermon I was more instructed than under all that I had heard before put together. In the evening he preached on “He healeth the broken in heart.” Both of these sermons were of such service to me that I never more gave such a loose to sin as I had before.’¹

On the 23rd August 1769, Mr. Wesley visited Trevecca on the occasion of Lady Huntingdon’s birthday, and the first anniversary of the opening of the college. Mr. Wesley preached in the chapel that evening, and afterwards, at nine o’clock, at the request of Mr. Howell Harris, to the family, returning to Lady Huntingdon’s, where he was entertained. The next day was one of the great gatherings, crowds coming from far and near, bringing with them baskets of bread and meat. Mr. Wesley administered the Sacrament to the household in the early morning. At ten, the sainted Fletcher preached, and the Welsh hymnologist in the vernacular, the service lasting till nearly two o’clock. At three Mr. Wesley

¹ *Early Methodist Preachers*, vol. iv. pp. 174, 175.

and Mr. Fletcher preached again. In the evening, between seven and eight, the love-feast began. This was the first instance of the Agapæ being held in Wales, and the record is ‘many were comforted.’ In addition to those mentioned above, Daniel Rowlands, Howel Davies, Peter Williams, and John Shirley took part in these memorable services.

Mr. Wesley came to Brecon again on Wednesday, August 14, 1771. He continued in the neighbourhood till the 19th, preaching at Brecon, Hay, and probably in other places. It was on this occasion that the first reference is made to the cause at Hay, but inasmuch as Mr. Wesley preached at ‘the neat new chapel,’ a Society had been formed here some years previously. He had preached at Clyro in 1747, and possibly in the neighbourhood of Hay, as there are several places Mr. Wesley visited in the Principality which are not mentioned in the journals. Hay would have special attractions for him. It was here where the protomartyr of Methodism had been ‘faithful unto death.’ William Seward was a man of considerable property, of meagre education and talents, but of great zeal and devotion to the cause of Christ. He was a native of Badsey in Worcestershire, and had been out to America with Whitefield during his second visit. In 1740 he visited Cowbridge, where he met with Howell Harris. They travelled together to Newport, where they were pelted with apples, stones, and dirt. Harris’s coat was torn to tatters, and his wig stolen by a furious mob. At Caerleon, in addition to a similar repetition of brutalities, Seward had a furious blow on the eye, in consequence of which he became totally blind. At Monmouth the Duke of B—— and Lord N—— ordered a drum to be beaten by their sides. Two years later Seward came to Hay, where he stood on the green at one end of the town, known as the Black Lion Green. After listening for a short time in silence, the ignorant crowd began assaulting the preacher by throwing stones. One huge missile, thrown by a cowardly ruffian,

struck the messenger of peace, who fell senseless to the ground. Seward, like his Master, prayed for his murderer, entreated those around not to punish him, and

‘Took his last triumphant flight
From Calvary’s to Zion’s height.’

Beneath a giant yew-tree in Cusop churchyard, about a mile from Hay, is found the martyr’s grave. He died October 22, 1742, aged thirty-eight.¹

William Williams, the Welsh hymnologist, then a medical student at Hay, was converted under the preaching of Howell Harris some time prior to 1740, when he took deacon’s orders in the Established Church. These and other facts point out the probably early formation of a Methodist Society at Hay. It was at Hay that Mr. Wesley first met with Dr. Maclaine’s translation of Mosheim’s *Ecclesiastical History*, and commented upon Mr. Shinstra’s ‘Letter against Fanaticism,’ ‘which,’ he says, ‘if the reasoning were just, would fix the charge of fanaticism on our Lord Himself and all His apostles.’

Travelling from the north of England *via* Salop, Mr. Wesley visited the county of Brecon again on Thursday, August 13, 1772, and during the following three days he preached at Trevecca, Brecon, etc. While at Trevecca, Mr. Howell Harris complained sadly to him about the ‘barefaced reprobation and broad Antinomianism’ preached by the young men who were then at the college. Mr. Wesley writes that Mr. Howell Harris’s heart and his own were ‘knit together as in the beginning.’ He spent two very comfortable days at Brecon, and went on to the western parts of the Principality.

Returning from the western counties *via* Llandilo, Mr. Wesley came to Brecon on Wednesday, August 24, 1774, and preached to a large congregation, which included most of the gentry of the town, with great plainness of speech, on

¹ Tyerman’s *Wesley*, vol. i. p. 342.

'the narrow way,' the service being held in the Town Hall. The next day he preached within the walls of the old church at Hay. 'The Jumpers,' says Mr. Wesley, 'were first in court and afterwards in the house. Some of them leaped up many times, men and women, several feet from the ground; they clapped their hands with the utmost violence; they shook their heads; they distorted all their features; they threw their arms and legs to and fro in all variety of postures; they sung, roared, shouted, screamed with all their might, to the no small terror of those that were near them.' Some were greatly shocked, others said, 'Now the power of God is come indeed.'

On Monday, August 16, 1775, he visited Hay, and the following day preached at Trevecca. Howell Harris had gone to his reward on the 21st July 1773, but his thoughts still lived, and the beauty of the place, and the loveliness of the people at the college orphanage was a source of delight. Preaching at Brecon on the 18th, he went on the next day to Carmarthen.

In July 1777, Mr. Wesley spent two days in the county of Brecon, preaching on the bulwarks at the county town, also visiting Mr. Gwynne, who was just recovering from a dangerous illness, but not recovered from the seriousness which it occasioned. Whether Mr. Gwynne had been less zealous than formerly is not known, but Mr. Wesley was anxious that the sickness should prove a lasting blessing.

On Friday, August 13, 1779, notwithstanding a fall down a steep pair of stairs at Monmouth in the morning, he set out in company with his brother and family for Brecon, and preached there in the evening. Leaving his brother behind, he went on to Carmarthen. The next time Mr. Wesley visited Brecon was Monday, April 23, 1781, in company with his faithful friend and colleague Joseph Bradford, who was taken seriously ill in the neighbourhood, in consequence of which he remained for some months at Bailie, near Defynog,

at the comfortable home of Mr. Walter Williams, who for years was a most faithful and active Methodist, where he was most carefully nursed until perfectly restored to health.

Mr. Wesley did not visit Brecon again till the 11th of August 1784. Two days were spent in the town, and the great preacher was greatly gratified to find ‘the little flock’ in great peace, increasing in number as well as in strength. ‘I preached,’ says he, ‘to such a congregation I never saw before. The power of God was so present, it seemed as if every one must know the Lord, from the least to the greatest.’ There were several very influential and godly people connected with the Methodist Society at this time.

Four years passed away before the founder of Methodism visited Breconshire again. On Saturday, August 16, 1788, he rode from Monmouth to Brecon, preached the same evening, and twice on Sunday—in the chapel at eight, and to an overcrowded congregation in the Town Hall in the evening. ‘The little company here,’ he reports, ‘are truly alive to God.’ In August 1790 the venerable founder came to Brecon and the Principality for the last time. He preached in the Town Hall and the Watton Chapel on ‘the state of the Church at Ephesus,’ and ‘the Lord’s lamentation over Jerusalem.’ Very early the next morning Mrs. Walter Williams of Bailie brought her first-born to receive the blessing of the Apostle of Methodism as he passed that way. He was now verging on his eighty-eighth birthday, and within a few months of his immortal crown; leaving at Brecon a very hopeful and interesting Society. Mr. Wesley spent rather more than sixty days in the county, and if he only preached twice a day on an average, he would have preached rather more than one hundred and twenty times. We know that he preached three and four times a day, and so arranged his travels that this was accomplished almost without intermission.

There is considerable doubt as to the exact date when the

first Society was formed in the county town. The Rev. John Hughes, a native of Brecon, and an author of considerable eminence, in an article in an old Eurgrawn, 1834, pp. 113, 114, suggests that it was not long before 1756. He further states that the first Society was formed by Mr. Charles Wesley, who was assisted by Harri Llwyd, the first Wesleyan bi-lingual local preacher, who lived at Rhydri, Caerphilly. The Rev. T. Wynne Jones, in his *History of Brecon Methodism*, contends for an earlier date. We know that Mr. Wesley preached at Llanddwŷ (Landan or Llanthew), a village within two miles of Brecon, on the 25th April 1744 and again in 1745. Notwithstanding the dilapidated state of the church when Mr. Wesley visited the place, it was one of historical importance. It was near here that Giraldus Cambrensis had lived and worked; where Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, prosecuted a crusade mission in 1187-89, but was out-influenced by the eloquence of the Welshman; where a notorious feast was held annually on the Lord's day, and large crowds assembled, and scenes of drunkenness and disorder occurred. It does not require a great stretch of imagination to believe that many from Brecon had gone to Llanddwŷ to hear the great preacher, and that the light of truth had shined into their hearts. Mr. Charles Wesley visited Brecon in 1748, as did also his brother the same year; and we know that in going through to Brecon on his journey to Builth he went considerably out of his way, which we can scarcely conceive him doing, especially remembering the roughness of the weather, and the heavy fall of snow, unless he held a service there.

The first Methodists met for worship in the house of Mr. Thomas James, and afterwards at the house of William Gilbert, who generously gave a corner of his orchard, where Mr. Wesley and his co-workers had been in the habit of holding open-air services, as a site for a new chapel. The chapel was erected in Free Street and Little Free Street, on

the left side of the road leading to Watton. Mr. Gilbert also subscribed £100 towards building the chapel, and Mr. Wesley £80.

The Rev. Lot Hughes, who was stationed in Brecon in 1812–13, and again in 1843–45, and did more perhaps than any of his contemporaries to preserve the history of Methodism in Wales, says that the first chapel was built in 1771. We think, however, that Mr. Wynne Jones is right in concluding that the Society was formed before 1756. Mr. Jones says that Mr. Watkins joined the Wesleyan Church in 1753. Mr. John Prickard, a travelling preacher who went out from Brecon, says that ‘the Society had been raised up and kept by Mr. Wesley for near twenty years’ previous to the year 1770. Mr. Prickard, referring to the loss he had sustained in the death of his old class-leader, Mr. Watkins of Glanusk, which occurred on January 19, 1774, also writes, ‘He had been a zealous preacher for twenty years, and enjoyed the love of God uninterruptedly for four-and-twenty years.’¹ These references point out the year 1750 as being the one when the Methodist Society was first formed at Brecon. It is certain that on the 21st March 1750, in company with Christopher Hopper, Mr. Wesley came to Brecon, and remained in the town that evening; and it is exceedingly probable that the Society was then formed.

The Methodist Society in Brecon was favoured beyond any of her sister Societies in the Principality, being blessed with several families of great wealth, high social status, and withal conspicuous for their ability and godliness. William Gilbert was a man of means and influence, generosity and exemplary conduct. John Watkins of Glanusk was a most devoted Christian, class-leader, local preacher, and a gentleman of position and power. Hugh Bold, who was the first Methodist steward, was bailiff of Brecon four times. Mr. Wesley, writing to the Rev. Z. Yewdall, stationed that year

¹ *Early Lives of Methodist Preachers*, vol. iv. p. 182.

at Swansea, and who had some difficult business on hand, advised him to see Mr. Bold of Brecon, of whom Mr. Wesley says, ‘I know no attorney to be depended on like him.’ When Lady Huntingdon made an attempt to take away from Mr. Wesley and his followers the Watton chapel, Mr. Bold at once secured it for the Wesleyan Methodist body. He was the attorney engaged in drawing out the original leases and agreements of the Gyfarthfa and other large works in the hill district. He died on the 10th of February 1809, and was interred at the Priory, Brecon. His son became the Recorder of Brecon, and his great-grandson was for many years the Chairman of the Quarter Sessions, and died only a few years since at Boughrood Castle.

John Church, who purchased the Frwdgreh estate, was one of the original trustees, and provided a most hospitable home for Mr. Wesley and his preachers. His younger son, the Rev. William Church, who entered the ministry in 1777, and continued a travelling preacher for thirteen years, was the grandfather of the Rev. H. L. Church, who recently passed peacefully away at Upper Norwood, after being a most useful minister for many years.

Mr. Walter Williams of Bailie was a most generous and influential Methodist. Dr. Coke also hailed from Brecon. His father, Bartholomew Coke, was the son of the Rector of Llanfrynnach, near Brecon, and grandson of Henry Coke (or Cooke) of Wern-Chwirth, in Radnorshire, and had attained celebrity at Brecon as an apothecary. Bartholomew was elected Mayor of Brecon in 1737 and 1758, and Justice of the Peace in 1768. Dr. Coke himself was Mayor of Brecon in 1770. Two years later he became minister of the gospel, assisted by Thomas Maxfield, who had at this time left the Methodists. Dr. Coke left the Church, and became a most zealous Methodist, filling a very important place in the early history of Methodism.¹

¹ Dr. Etheridge's *Life of Coke*.

Walter Churchev was also an enthusiastic Welshman, a lawyer who frequently corresponded with John and Charles Wesley, Fletcher, Benson, and Coke, and claimed the honour of having first suggested to Mr. Wesley the publishing of the Arminian Magazine. Tyerman says that Churchev had no claim to this honour, but adduces no proof in support of his assertion. He was Town-Clerk for Brecon for many years, a good man, a devoted student of Methodist doctrine, and was greatly esteemed. Dr. Powell was also another ; of whom Mr. Wesley says, in writing to Churchev, ‘I am glad to hear that Dr. Powell continues in the “good way.” He seems to be of a frank open temper, and to be skilful in his profession.’

Eynon Bynon of Pentwyn Clyro was another of the group of noble men raised in this Circuit. He very early stood by and ably defended Methodism. The sainted Fletcher on his way to Trevecca lost his road, and not knowing whither he was going, gave the rein to his horse, and the faithful steed brought him to Mr. Bynon’s house, just when the good man was beginning the service, to the delight of all. This worthy man often dared the crowd and firmly stood by the gospel, and with considerable power proclaimed the Lord Jesus Christ the only Saviour of the world.

Marmaduke Gwynne of Garth, the wealthy county magistrate, who gave his daughter to the poet of Methodism, who attended Conference, and often visited the Foundry, Bristol, and other places, would most probably often be found with the Methodists in his own county town. Assuming that the first Methodist Society in the county was established at Brecon about 1750, then the chapel was erected some twenty years later. The Society at Hay would be formed not long after that of Brecon, as the chapel there was erected in 1771, Mr. Wesley preaching in it in the month of August that same year.

It is evident that no Society existed in this county previous to the above date. In August 1748 we have a list of the

Societies. During that year Wales had four only, viz.—1. Cardiff, 2. Fonmon, 3. Llanfais, 4. Llantrisant.¹ In 1749 the first appointment of ‘Superintendents,’ or, as they were then designated, ‘Assistants,’ was made. A Mr. Thomas was the one chosen for that position for Wales, who was probably a clergyman particularly intimate with Charles Wesley, and lived somewhere near or in Cardiff. No record attached to his name is to be found after this year; but from this period Mr. Wesley regularly appointed travelling preachers to Wales, and they would visit Brecon, Hay, Builth, and other places in the county on their rounds.

The indefatigable Thomas Taylor, who itinerated through South Wales, crossing mountains, fording rivers, and plunging into bogs with empty purse and stomach, proclaiming with burning zeal and divine power the unsearchable riches of Christ, refers to the hardships and difficulties he had to pass through from Neath to Brecon.

Christopher Hopper also visited Brecon. In 1770 Brecon became the head of what included the North Wales Circuit, the ministers appointed travelling the counties of Brecon, Radnor, Montgomery, and the Border counties of England.

For twenty years the Calvinistic and Wesleyan Methodists worshipped together in the town of Brecon, but in 1770 Lady Huntingdon made an effort to reserve the chapel for the use only of those who agreed with her views. Mr. Bold resolutely opposed this, being cognisant of the fact that Mr. Wesley himself contributed £80 towards its erection, and her ladyship nothing. The Calvinistic section soon after this built a chapel in the Struet. The progress of the work was greatly retarded by the bigotry and controversy which for years prevailed. The Rev. James Wood expressed his dissatisfaction with the result of his own labours in the Brecon and Pembroke Circuits during his itinerancy in 1776 and 1777 thus: ‘Controversy ran high; Calvinism, or rather rank

¹ Smith’s *History of Wesleyan Methodism*, pp. 264–267.

Antinomianism, was the order of the day.¹ Yet he felt that he had seals to his ministry.

The travelling preachers were constantly on their rounds, and often in great danger. Richard Rodda, referring to his travels, says: ‘The next year (1769–1770) I spent partly in Pembrokeshire and partly in Breconshire and Radnorshire. In this round I attempted to enlarge the borders. In the strength of the Lord I went to Bishop’s Castle, a town wicked to a proverb. I had nobody with me, but the Lord was with me of a truth.’ He sent out the crier, ‘and hundreds flocked to hear, and I bless God He did not let me want matter, manner, or liberty,’ wrote the preacher. Some threw their hats in his face, but the warrior of the cross went on undaunted, and soon he saw the tears trickling down over many faces; and after he had finished the service, five or six came round him, and begged him to come again. The victory was of such importance, and so complete, that the next day he extended his travels as far as Tenbury, in Worcestershire. In this place he met with a Mr. G——, who had come on a similar mission, and who was very roughly handled. Mr. Rodda himself was surrounded by a mob, who brought gunpowder with them, and filled the house with smoke. One rough-looking man sat near the preacher with a large bludgeon in his hand, who became favourably impressed, and when he heard the explosion of the powder he rose from his seat, and with his mouth full of oaths, threatened to knock out the brains of those persons who had made a disturbance, and the preacher was encouraged to go on with his work.²

John Prickard, who travelled in the Brecon Circuit in 1780, refers to his troubles and difficulties in certain parts of Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire.

The Rev. James Buckley, who was appointed to the Brecon Circuit in 1796–97, ‘reckoned,’ says his biographer, ‘among

¹ *Methodist Magazine*, 1842, p. 896, ‘Memoir of Rev. J. Wood.’

² *Early Methodist Preachers*, vol. ii. p. 310.

the most useful and happy, likewise the most laborious, the two years spent in this Circuit.' Mr. Buckley intimated to some friends his intention of visiting Knighton, but they endeavoured to dissuade him by telling him that the last preacher who had made the attempt was mobbed out of the town. Nothing daunted, accompanied by a few friends, he set off; hired the Town Hall, sent round the crier, and in half an hour after his arrival he was in the hall. A few poor people only came at first, but the congregation gradually increased, and when he began to preach there were two hundred people present. The preacher succeeded in arresting their attention from the outset, and a very gracious influence rested upon the congregation. This was a service to be remembered; at first many persons stood uncovered, but gradually they took off their hats, became more interested and attentive, and many were so impressed that at the close they thanked the preacher and asked him to come again. It was the commencement of a gracious revival of religion. Mr. Buckley noticed one man leaning on a pillar greatly affected, and unable to restrain his tears. Some years after, he was accosted by a respectable lady in Liverpool, who asked him if he remembered that service at Knighton and observing a man strongly affected in the congregation. On replying in the affirmative, she added, 'Sir, he was my father.' The head of the family was deeply wrought upon, gave himself to Christ, and before long all the family were brought to the true enjoyment of religion.¹

The Brecon Circuit, which had remained almost stationary for years as to the number of members it reported, now had new life and vigour infused into it, and it developed rapidly. In 1770 there were 120 members; in 1791, 116; in 1796, 121; in 1797, 254; in 1798, 407; and in 1799, 560. These figures tell their own tale. They show clearly that a new life had been brought into existence.

¹ *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1842, 'Memoir of Rev. J. Buckley.'

In 1799 the Brecon Circuit was divided, Welshpool becoming the head of a new Circuit, including the whole area covered by the present Welshpool, Newtown, and Llanidloes Circuits. In 1803 Merthyr Tydfil was separated from Brecon, and became the head of a new Circuit, the new Circuit covering the whole country which at the present time forms the Merthyr, Aberdare, Tredegar, and Brynmawr Circuits. In 1805 Kington Circuit and in 1867 Builth also were formed from the Brecon Circuit. Brecon Methodism has a respectable history. The name of Dr. Coke will ever remain fragrant as the 'Father of Missions.' He outgrew the confines of his native country, and could truly say, with the Apostle of Methodism, 'the world is my parish,' and for such a man the Mediterranean only could provide a grave.

John Prickard was a native of Pembrokeshire, but was converted to God and began to preach at Brecon. He travelled ten years, and was then called to his reward. A man thoroughly devoted to God, and an eminent pattern of holiness.

William Church began to preach in 1774, and entered the ministry, where he spent fourteen years; in 1790 he retired and settled at Deptford.

John Hughes, the author of *Horæ Britannicæ*, was born, trained, converted, and began to preach here, doing a great work for Christ and Methodism for many years.

Hugh Ransom, who entered the ministry in 1800, and after spending twenty-one years therein gloriously triumphed over death, entered the joy of his Lord, and left a reputation which is a beauty and a joy for ever. Thomas Jones, the son of William Jones of Glasbury, entered the ministry in 1826, and after serving the Connexion faithfully for forty-one years, retired to Lytham, where he passed away in peace in 1879.

James Stewart Thomas, who went out to Southern Africa

in 1838, and was called to suffer death during a furious war between hostile tribes at the New Beacham Wood Station in 1856, was brought up at Hay in the Brecon Circuit.

The first Welsh Wesleyan preachers did not visit Brecon till about the end of 1807. That year the Rev. William Batten was stationed at Merthyr Tydfil. Mr. Evan Edwards, who was then a most zealous and devoted local preacher in the iron metropolis, had undertaken a great deal of work, and through his preaching had really formed a Society at Crughowell before Mr. Batten came to the Circuit. In the spring of 1808, Mr. Batten and Mr. Edwards together visited Llangynydr, Brecon, Defynog, and other places, and they were so successful that several Societies were formed as the result of that round, which continued to grow rapidly. The services were held in the English chapel in the afternoon on Sunday and every Thursday evening.

The first Welsh Wesleyan chapel in the county was that of Llangynydr, which was opened for divine worship in 1808 ; and Defynog was built in the following year. Jones Bathafarn and William Davies, Africa, had visited Defynog as early as 1806, it being then considered a part of the Llandilo Circuit. In 1810 Brecon was made the head of a new Circuit, with three ministers—Owen Jones, Humphrey Jones the first, and John Jones the second, being appointed to travel therein. The first year they reported a membership of 200. In Brecon there were difficulties, the Welsh and English worshipping in the same chapel, with two separate interests, Societies, and Circuits, and it was not always easy to avoid friction. In 1814, the year after the death of Dr. Coke, the Conference felt the financial strain, as well as the slow growth of English Methodism in the Principality, to be a burden, so decided to amalgamate the Welsh and English Circuits, to reduce the staff, and consequently the expenditure in several Circuits. Brecon was one of the towns in which two Circuits were amalgamated. David Rogers was appointed

superintendent, with Owen Rees and Robert Jones as bi-lingual preachers, and Robert Gardner, an Englishman. When the sainted Hugh Hughes—one of the most successful of ministers, who had been the superintendent of the Welsh Circuit, and was about to leave for another sphere—returned from Conference, so much feeling had been provoked by the decision of the Conference that two trustees brought him a letter, signed by William Gibbert and others, prohibiting him to enter the chapel to preach his farewell sermon. Mr. Hughes then said that inasmuch as they refused him permission to preach in the chapel, no other Methodist minister could preach there. This frightened Mr. Gibbert, in consequence of which he spent a sleepless night, and the next day sent to Mr. Hughes to say that if he could influence the others he should have the chapel as usual, or, failing that, he would grant him his own parlour. The other trustees declining to yield, the parlour was the honoured place where Mr. Hughes preached his farewell sermon.

When the superintendent of the English Circuit, the Rev. Thomas C. Rushworth, returned the following week, he was told how the trustees had treated Mr. Hughes, whereupon he declined to preach in the chapel. The Sunday following the bi-lingual superintendent entered the chapel, to find the stairs of the pulpit guarded by several of the trustees. He did not contend with them, but retired and preached with marvellous power in the open air to a large congregation, which he did again in the evening. Mr. David Rogers was one of the ablest and most eloquent preachers in the Principality, and his Christian bearing, combined with powerful preaching on these occasions, turned the tide in his favour, the town and the congregation being with him, and the trustees who had acted so rashly even welcomed him to the chapel. They soon realized that it was their privilege to have such an able minister in their midst. Mr. Rogers and his colleagues soon saw the work prosper. They lived down the opposition, and

were greatly beloved before the end of the year, when Mr. Rogers left for another sphere. There is no doubt that the trustees who had treated him so inconsiderately were utterly ignorant of the man they determined not to hear. They sincerely repented, and became enthusiastic admirers of the great Welsh preacher, and deeply regretted his departure from the Circuit.

The scheme of amalgamation was reversed in a few years. The Welsh and English worshipped in the same chapel until 1824, when, on the 24th and 25th of August, the Struet Chapel was dedicated for divine worship. The meetings in connection with the opening of this chapel were seasons of great grace. The Revs. David Morgan, Richard Bonner, Owen Rees, John Davies, J. Oliver, John Williams, and David Jones (Beddgelert) being the preachers on the occasion, such names were sufficiently attractive to draw large crowds of people to the new chapel.

One of the difficulties which the early Methodist preachers and people had to contend with was the heavy debts which burdened their sanctuaries. Their chapels were erected in some instances without perhaps counting the cost, and the majority of the people were very poor. The growth of towns and villages was scarcely anticipated, and in many instances the chapels were erected in places out of sight. Chapels had been erected in the Circuit by the Welsh for their own use exclusively at Llangynydr in 1808, Defynog in 1809, Crughowell in 1812, Pwllgloyw in 1814, and Brecon in 1824; and when the Rev. Hugh Hughes, as Chairman of the District, returned to Brecon in 1831, he found the chapel under a very heavy debt. Mr. Hughes at once set about paying off the debt, and succeeded in getting a friend to lend £600 free of interest, and to take it back a £100 at a time. Then he had the consent of the District Meeting to collect money in aid of the Brecon Chapel throughout all the Circuits in South Wales. Mr. Hughes himself visited all except two of the

Circuits, begging from door to door each day, and preaching in the chapels in the evening. In this way he collected £200, secured £100 grant, and paid off £300 of the debt. For many years there was a prosperous Society at Brecon, with which there were connected many generous, godly, and devoted Methodists :—Mr. Jones, the butcher, and his wife ; Rees Watkins, who for many years was a tower of strength ; Jane Buckot, a celebrated and well-known character, who by her experience, patience, and fidelity to God and Methodism left a great void in the religious life of the Church, when in 1837 she passed within the veil ; Mary Price, Roger Edwards, Jannet Powell, Anne Davies, Martha Powell, and Jane Cure. The last named was ninety-two years old when she died, and had been a faithful member for sixty years. She was probably converted under the preaching of Mr. Wesley, and joined the Society. She could better worship in the Welsh language, but continued an English Wesleyan until a Welsh church was established, with which she identified herself, and continued zealous and active, so far as her health permitted, up to the end.

The Struet (or Ystrywad) Chapel gradually lost its hold upon the people, or rather those who were connected with it failed to draw others to the place, and the congregation dwindled away. This was attributed to various causes—lack of supply in the pulpit, the growth of the English language, the dearth of young people, etc., all of which and other reasons contributed towards weakening the Society. It was resolved to sell the old tabernacle, and to build a smaller chapel at Llanfaes, which was opened for divine worship in August 1871. From a Welsh standpoint this was never a great success. It is fortunate, however, that the second chapel was built at Llanfaes, for being some distance from Lion Street, and surrounded by a population, few of whom would attend the Circuit chapel, both are now doing well.

Defynog also has a history. Bailie, the home of Mr.

Walter Williams, the hospitable home in which Mr. Wesley left his colleague Joseph Bradford, is near Defynog. The Revs. Edward Jones (Bathafarn) and William Davies (Africa), as he was known in Wales, preached in Defynog in 1807. They stood near the Bull Inn then occupied by a Mr. Davies, whose daughter at that same time became a member of the Society, and up to her death in 1836 continued a most devoted Christian. In 1808 Mr. David Rogers again preached there, and was invited to Llwynerychydd, which he accepted, with the result that Mrs. Jones and her two daughters identified themselves with the Methodists.

Robert Philips, an intimate friend of John Prickard, and one of the little flock of Brecon, had gone to live at Defynog, hailed the establishment of a Methodist Society in that neighbourhood, and, identifying himself without delay, was faithful unto death. He died in 1824, at the age of seventy-eight years.

Bailie was visited by many of the early Methodist preachers. Mrs. Williams, who, at the time of her death in 1825, had been a member of Society for sixty-nine years, and who died at the age of eighty-eight, said that she heard John Nelson preach at her father's house. The long connection of the principal family in the neighbourhood with John Wesley and his preachers would not be without its effect upon the inhabitants of the district, so that when the gospel was preached in the vernacular many of the leading families identified themselves with the Wesleyan Church without delay. A site for a chapel was secured, and fifteen of the leading farmers became trustees, each one giving £15 towards the cost of erection, which was accomplished under the direction of Mr. Price of the Park, assisted by Mr. Jones, Llwynerychydd, and opened for divine worship in 1809. The chapel was considered one of the best at that time. The friends who were interested in the chapel, as soon as the date of the opening services was decided, caused it to be published

throughout the length and breadth of the land, that sermons would be preached upon doctrines in dispute.

The effect of this was that crowds came together to hear the Revs. Jones (Bathafarn), Davies (Africa), and David Rogers, who discoursed on the possibility of falling from grace, the universality of the love of God, and the atonement of Christ. The meetings left a profound impression among the people, many of the leading families uniting themselves forthwith to the Wesleyan Society in their respective neighbourhoods. The old families at Bailie, Llwynerychydd, Pantglas, etc., were known to all the Methodist preachers far and wide; and the family names of Jones, Williams, James, Davies, and Jenkin of Defynog are honoured and honourable in the annals of Breconshire Methodism.

Latterly Defynog has suffered much from external causes, resulting in somewhat injurious effects upon the Church. In this village are deposited the mortal remains of the Revs. Isaac Jenkins and Henry Wilcox, two greatly beloved and highly honoured Methodist ministers.

Pwllgloyw, a village situated on the old road between Brecon and Builth in the vale of Honddu, was visited by the Methodist preachers as early as 1809, among whom was Lot Hughes, and a Society established in 1812, which was for many years in a flourishing and prosperous state. The chapel was built in 1814. Here the family of Pant-y-cored (one of the daughters was the grandmother of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, M.A.), joined the Methodist Church. Also the Pantllwyfan family, many of whom are honourably connected with Methodism at Brecon and elsewhere up to the present time; the Davieses of Coegen, who suffered much from their neighbours because they had joined the Methodists; the families of Coed, Cencoedbach, Graig Ddu, and Tyn-y-waen, etc. The Rev. Lewis Jones, who entered the ministry in 1833, and died in London in 1883, a most highly respected and gifted minister in the Welsh work, was a native of this place.

When John Cricket, a young Englishman, was stationed in the Brecon English Circuit in 1790, he went out to Bailie to his appointment and stayed for the night. The following morning, while strolling along for a walk, admiring the charming scenery, and lost in pleasant reverie, a gentleman on horseback accosted him, but the Methodist preacher, being perfectly ignorant of the language and names of places, replied to every question which the stranger addressed to him, 'I don't know.' At last the horseman excitedly and abruptly asked him what he did know, whereupon the preacher said, 'I know my way home from this place, and that is enough for me.' The Rev. William Davies (Africa), preaching on Psalm xxxix. 12, 'I am a stranger,' related the above incident, and with wonderful power of voice, pathos, and inspiration added that 'many of the old friends knew their way home, and that was enough for them,' and the effect was truly marvellous.

A large number of good and true Methodists have indeed found their way home from the neighbourhood of Brecon.

When the Rev. Hugh Hughes was appointed to Brecon in 1831, he commenced preaching at Llanfrynnach, where he succeeded in establishing a small Society.

In 1847 the Rev. John Rees was superintendent of the Circuit, and he secured a site and erected a small chapel at Lock, where there is a small church at the present time.

The present chapel in Lion Street was built in 1835, at a cost of about £2000. It was opened for divine service on Sunday, September 27, and at the services on that and the following days the officiating ministers were the Rev. John Hughes, author of *Horæ Britannicæ*, a native of Brecon; David Williams, generally known as 'The King,' a designation which no one would hesitate to give him who saw and heard him in the pulpit; David Morgan, John Scott, and William Atherton. These services were largely attended, were seasons of rich blessing, and liberal sums were contributed towards

the Trust Funds. The Society which for eighty-five years had worshipped in the old Watton Chapel—where the Wesleys, Whitefield, Harris, Dr. Coke, Fletcher, Benson, Bradford, Taylor, James Wood, James Buckley, Dr. Dixon, John Hughes, David Rogers, Hugh Hughes, Jones (Bathafarn), and a host of other ambassadors of Christ had proclaimed with eloquent tongues, with hearts on fire, and intellects illumined with the light of heaven, the unsearchable riches of Christ—surrounded by blessed memories of grace, with tender feelings of sorrow and joy, now took the ark to its new home, where it has rested until now.

In 1885 the Welsh and English Circuits were amalgamated; Llanfaes, Defynog, Pwllgloew, and Lock were transferred to the English Circuit ; and it is to be hoped that the Circuit may steadily grow, and the old traditions, struggles, victories, testimonies, sanctified lives, triumphant deaths, the glories of the past, may all be surpassed by the greater glory of the future. ‘Instead of the fathers shall be thy children,’ who shall ‘be made princes in all the earth,’ and the ‘name remembered in all generations.’

The Brecon Methodists have a noble heritage. The old proverb says that ‘the life of the dead is placed in the memory of the living.’ May we hope that the remembrance of these things will prove a source of future pleasure ?

‘The sweet remembrance of the just
Shall flourish when he sleeps in dust.

CHAPTER XI.

METHODISM IN MERTHYR TYDFIL AND THE HILL DISTRICT.

Wesley at Aberdare—Merthyr—Gellygaer—Merthyr New Chapel—Mr. Guest and Family—Dowlais—Cefn—Welsh Missionary—Edward Jones—Rhymney—Tredegar—Ebbw Vale—Nantyglo—Blaina—Brynmawr—Aberdare—Hirwain—Blaengwawr Family—Thomas Aubrey—William Powell—The Rhondda.

IN Mr. Wesley's journal no reference is made to his having visited Merthyr Tydfil, although this is the more mysterious, inasmuch as the Rev. Thomas Price, the respected Rector of Merthyr at that time, was an intimate friend of the Apostle of Methodism. It is reported, however, on good authority, that Mr. Wesley visited Merthyr, called at the parsonage, but was disappointed to find that his old friend was from home. In returning from Breconshire on the 25th of May 1744, Mr. Wesley 'rode over the still snowy mountains' to Gellygaer, where he preached at twelve o'clock, and in the evening at Cardiff. This was Mr. Wesley's first visit into this neighbourhood. On Thursday, April 6, 1749, after preaching in the morning on the top of a mountain, which was most probably that of Llanwno, Mr. Wesley came on his way from Llantrisant to Aberdare, where he arrived about noon, just as the bell was ringing for a burial. This had brought a large number of people together, to whom after the burial Mr. Wesley preached in the Parish Church, Mr. (Harri Llwyd) Henry Lloyd from Rhydri, who was his companion on this occasion, translating into Welsh the substance of his sermon. Mr. Wesley was making his way to Garth, to attend the wedding of his brother Charles. 'On the way to Brecon,' he says, 'we

had almost continuous rain from Aberdare to the great rough mountain that hangs over the vale of Brecknock ; but as soon as we gained the top of this we left the clouds behind us. We had a mild, fair, sunshiny evening the remainder of our journey.' Such was Mr. Wesley's first visit to Aberdare.

On Tuesday, March 20, 1750, in company with Christopher Hopper, he rode from Cardiff to Aberdare, which he describes as sixteen Welsh miles over the mountains, expecting to preach there. On his arrival in what was then a small village, he found that no notice had been given, and after resting for an hour they travelled on through incessant rain to Brecon. Twice during this journey his horse fell and threw him over its head, but without hurt to man or beast. These were the only visits made by Mr. Wesley to this neighbourhood.

Merthyr, in its early history, was included in the Brecon Circuit. When the large iron works of Messrs. Homfray were opened in the neighbourhood of Merthyr, a great number of Englishmen were attracted, and principally from Yorkshire. These godly people were determined to carry their religion with them into this Welsh village. They held prayer-meetings in their own cottages, which attracted considerable attention, and many of the inhabitants consented to join them. The cottages became too small, in consequence of which they rented the long room behind the 'Star' for their public services. This room also was often too small for the eager worshippers, so they took their stand at the street corners, or oftentimes in the graveyard in front of St. Tydfil's Church, or in the market-place. As years rolled on the Methodists had gathered so much strength that no room would hold them, and it being inconvenient always to worship in the market-place, the graveyard, or at street corners, they were constrained to provide a place of worship sufficiently large for the crowds who came, and that should always be at their disposal. The visits from the travelling preachers

were rare indeed, for the Circuit included the Societies in Merthyr and Welshpool, together with those of all the intervening towns and villages. There were only two ministers in charge of all these Societies, and when they paid their occasional visit they were appreciated as the angels of God. During their absence on the Circuit round the members themselves threw their whole heart and soul into the work.

In the year 1795, Merthyr Tydfil first appears on the Minutes of the Conference with Caleb Simmons as the minister in charge. Whether this was some temporary and special arrangement is not stated, but the following year Merthyr Tydfil is returned as a part of the Brecon Circuit. During Mr. Simmons's year of residence a site was taken in the upper part of the village, then a green field near the Morlais, which was a pure limpid stream. The public-house known as the 'Boar's Head' was then a thatched cottage, and the next dwelling was separated therefrom by a green field. The site then chosen has remained, notwithstanding the rapid development of the town, the most central and convenient up to the present day. The foundation-stone of the new chapel was laid in the year 1796, at which time there was no Wesleyan place of worship between Neath and Abergavenny, or Brecon and Cardiff. The chapel was completed at a cost of £602, 13s. 7d., towards which the zealous Methodists managed to raise—including collections made at Brecon, the head of the Circuit, amounting to £8, 7s. 6d.—a grand total of £196. This may be regarded as a most conclusive proof of the wholeheartedness of these devoted people, especially when it is remembered that at the time there were no wealthy subscribers, the toilers of the Pendarren Iron Works being the chief contributors. One of the most energetic and zealous in the building of this chapel was Joseph Matthews, of whom Mr. Charles Wilkins relates the following story:—

'The site was fixed, but there was some difference of opinion as to the size of the chapel needed. Joseph Matthews wanted

a large one, and the others, contending that a smaller one would suffice, refused to yield. The place was marked out and plugs put in, after which the friends went home. But Joseph was not to be outdone. When night came on he crept softly out of his house, and stole down to the field without being observed. Then in the same quiet way he proceeded to the plugs, and removed every one of them further back, so carefully filling up the holes as to leave no trace of any one having touched them, and, having done this, Joseph went home with an inward gratification that he had done a good thing. He was never suspected, the foundation was laid, the alterations in the plans effected, and thus the shrewd brother in this subtle manner gained his end without the knowledge of his colleagues.'

The chapel was opened for divine service on June 18, 1797, and it was a memorable day indeed for the little village. The faithful souls who had worshipped in the cottage, the street, the graveyard, the long room of a public-house, and from their scant earnings had managed to raise nearly £200, rejoiced 'with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' The Rev. James Buckley, superintendent of the Circuit, was the preacher, and took as his text, 'This is the house of the Lord' (1 Chron. xxii. 1). The faithful few felt that for all their toils, struggles, self-sacrifice, difficulties, and persecutions the success of the day was an abundant reward.

Mr. Thomas Guest, father of the late Sir John Guest, and grandfather of Lord Wimborne, who was a most devoted local preacher, took a special interest also in the erection of this chapel. He not only contributed £50 towards the building fund, but took an active part in the operations, going to Bristol, for instance, to see the pillars turned for supporting the gallery. Occasionally he officiated as a local preacher in the new chapel, and also occupied other pulpits in the Circuit. The writer remembers hearing an old Methodist from Aberdare relate how Mr. Guest with his two sons walked over the Aberdare mountains on a Sunday morning to preach to a

small congregation in a tiny room with an earthen floor, and afterwards returned to Dowlais to dinner. It was a pleasant sight also to see the father and his two boys, Thomas and the late Sir John, wending their way, Sabbath by Sabbath, to the five o'clock morning prayer-meeting in the Wesleyan Chapel, Pontmorlais, and twice a day they were in regular attendance at the Sunday school.

Mr. Thomas Guest was an exceedingly capable businessman, under whose management the great Dowlais works developed at phenomenal speed, and being a devout Christian withal, his honest life and upright dealings with his fellow-men became a beautiful portraiture of his Christian profession. He sympathised with the needy, assisted to put many a struggling man upon his feet, and took a general interest in the welfare of the people he received into his employ. ‘A worthy and remarkable man,’ writes Mr. Charles Wilkins, ‘with an intellect more solid than brilliant, he always exhibited the gravity and strong religious convictions which characterized the brethren in the early epoch of Wesleyanism.’ ‘We might with propriety say with Aristides, “To be and not to seem was this man’s maxim.” Honest, generous, unaffected, with no courtly etiquette or fastidious manners, he seems to us a relic which time had spared of that stern Cromwellian age when Englishmen made themselves respected in every part of the world.’¹

On February 28, 1807, he departed this life universally regretted, his reputation fragrant, while the good deeds of his useful career were bringing forth an abundant harvest to the honour and praise of God. His son, Sir John, retained a kindly bearing towards the Wesleyans, but gradually drifted away. Thomas Revel Guest, although wild in his youth, became, like his father, a local preacher, and in Merthyr and afterwards in Cardiff exhibited a character uniformly pious and amiable, which endeared him to all. He sagely thought

¹ *History of Merthyr Tydfil*, p. 177.

that there was something else worth living for besides amassing wealth, and he often found greater pleasure in giving than in getting. Mr. Wilkins says that he was in the habit of distributing £300 every year between three of the religious institutions of his neighbourhood. So thorough and profound was the respect felt towards him by his employees, that all frivolity ceased immediately on his approach. On one occasion a servants' ball, for which great preparations had been made, was on the eve of taking place, when Mr. T. R. Guest arrived at Dowlais House, but with him present a ball was out of the question. He removed to Cardiff, of which town he was Mayor in 1835, and continued a faithful Methodist, and ultimately met his death on a mission of mercy. Hearing that an old friend in Ireland had become reduced in circumstances, he hastened thither to help him, and, like Howard, fell a victim to fever and passed away.

The promoters of the Merthyr Tydfil Wesleyan Chapel also included the names of the Browns, who afterwards became prominent in the adjoining country, George Wild, Milward, Onions, Shinton, Hemas, Ashton, etc., a devoted band of stalwart men.

From the beginning the Wesleyans at Merthyr introduced singing as a part of public worship. This was considered an innovation by the other Nonconformists of the town, and awakened stout opposition. The objection to singing was so decided that Mr. Jones, a Baptist minister of Ebenezer Chapel, who introduced it in the early part of the present century, was publicly hooted. The Wesleyans not only had singing, but included instrumental music in the shape of a bass viol played by John Drew, a blind Englishman, and there is no doubt that the musical part of the service assisted greatly in making the services attractive and successful.

In the year 1797 the Conference granted permission to make collections in the Shrewsbury and Chester Circuits in aid of the Merthyr Tydfil Chapel in the Brecon Circuit. In

1803 Merthyr became the head of a new Circuit, which covered the whole of the hill district west of Pontypool, with John Wood as the first appointed minister. On their way from the Bristol Conference of that year, the Rev. Owen Davies and Stephen Games conducted the first service in the Welsh language in that district. Mr. Davies, who had charge of the Welsh mission, was approached with a view of appointing a Welsh preacher to Merthyr, which he promised to do as soon as possible. In 1805 the Merthyr Stations ran thus: James Evans, Edward Jones, junior, the latter being the first Welsh Wesleyan minister who laboured in Merthyr. In the year 1802 a young man in Anglesea was converted under the preaching of John Maurice, and for twelve months he suffered incessant persecution in his own home, where his parents, brothers, sisters, and even servants would join together in making a great noise to drown his voice while he prayed. As a consequence of this persecution he removed to Merthyr, and notwithstanding his utter ignorance of the English language, he identified himself with the English Society. When Mr. Edward Jones was appointed missionary to Merthyr, this young man, Evan Edwards, and his friend Thomas Thomas were ready to join him. Mr. Jones found it difficult to commence his mission, no door being opened to him, with the exception of the English Chapel when not used by the English Wesleyans. The Welsh people did not object so much to the establishment of an English Society in the village, but to bring such a heresy into the Welsh camp as Welsh Wesleyan Methodism, was considered to be trenching upon sacred ground, which could not be tolerated. The Wesleyan missionary was denounced from pulpit and platform, everything he said was circulated as heresy or untruth, and for some months the conspiracy succeeded in preventing one of the most resolute and zealous of early Methodist preachers doing much work for Christ. ‘I wondered the more at this,’ said Mr. Jones, ‘because I determined not to

know anything save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.' He prayed earnestly and importunately, until he finally came to the conclusion, that if no door opened on the following Sunday he would give up his position and return to his old calling. While on his knees on the Sunday morning pleading with God, it came to his mind that he would go to Cefncoedcymmer, a small village about a mile and a half distant. Acting accordingly, he took his stand on the common, announced a hymn, and began to sing in Welsh :—

'Prosper Thou the message given
To Thy servants, Lord, most high.'

When he commenced singing he was alone with God, but by the time he had concluded his prayer, his powerful and penetrative voice had attracted a goodly company of the villagers. After preaching on 'The Great Feast,' he announced that if any one present would open his house, he would come to preach there on the following Wednesday. 'You shall come to my house,' was a rejoinder from one in the crowd, whither he went during the week, and a few were converted during that service who became the first members of the Welsh Wesleyan Church in that neighbourhood. Eventually this family was persuaded to close the door against the Methodist preacher ; but a Thomas Jenkins, living in Cefnisa, opened his house, and Evan Edwards and his friend Thomas Thomas, who had both been members of the English Society at Pontmorlais, now went over to the Welsh, the latter becoming the first class-leader, and the former a local preacher, two years later entering the ranks of the ministry.

During the two years that Mr. Jones laboured in the Circuit he was instrumental in establishing Societies at Merthyr, Cefncoedcymmer, Dowlais, Tredegar, Rhymney, Ebbw Vale, Beaufort, Llanelli, Blaenavon, Hirwain, Pontneddfechan, the Vale of Neath, and Cwmgwrelych.

In the year 1805 James Evans and Edward Jones, the

Welsh and English ministers then stationed at Merthyr, went together to Dowlais. They both preached near the house of Mr. Guest, who heard the sermons, and was greatly impressed by that of Mr. Jones, and he became particularly attached to him, and so remained up to the time of his death. Mr. Jones, who was at his bedside when he passed away, said that he should never forget the sight. The old man called his children around him, and exhorted each to live a godly life. He then prayed earnestly for each, and said that he was about to enter perfect happiness, and again entreated them all to meet him in heaven.

A Sunday school was started and prayer-meetings held in the house of Thomas Edwards, known as the Old Captain, in Chapel Street, and in Thomas Oliver's house, known as the Engine House over the blast furnace, and other places. In 1831 a chapel was opened, which has since been twice enlarged, besides a good chapel built for English services. The chapels are near to each other, and the Welsh and English Churches have worked harmoniously together.

Mr. Jones went on to Rhymney, where a small Society was formed, but which continued feeble for several years. The few Methodists met in a small house occupied by a Mr. Lewis in Old Carno, until they built a good chapel in 1837, which has since been converted into cottages, and a large commodious one on a more convenient site has taken its place. The first visit of Mr. Jones to Tredegar was singularly successful. Returning one day from Ebbw Vale, not knowing a single person in Tredegar, but determined to visit the place, and secure an opening for the preaching of the gospel, he was walking meditatively along the street, when a woman suddenly accosted him and asked if he were a preacher. Replying in the affirmative, he was requested to go with her at once to see her husband, who was ill, and wanted some one to pray with him. Mr. Jones gladly availed himself of this opportunity, and after prayer asked if

he might preach in the house, a request the sick man readily granted. Several friends and strangers gathered to hear the strange preacher, amongst whom was a celebrated pugilist named Richard Evans, who, together with his wife, was converted that same night. The next time the Wesleyan preacher visited Tredegar, he was invited to preach in the pugilist's house, which thenceforth became the preacher's home. The Calvinists, who were deadly opposed to the Wesleyan preacher, incited a drunken pugilist named David Hughes to attend the service to molest him. Hughes went to hear Mr. Jones, under the conviction that if half the things reported of this preacher were true he deserved summary treatment, and determined to handle him roughly. Utterly unconscious of the conspiracy, Mr. Jones was half-way through the service when Hughes entered the house. Some of the friends had heard of his coming, and were naturally anxious as to the result. As the service proceeded, the man moved quietly nearer to the preacher, the anxious ones momentarily expecting his onslaught, but they soon were surprised and delighted to see tears flowing copiously down his cheeks, and the intended disturber of the peace was on his knees crying for mercy. That same night he joined the Society, and became one of the most zealous and devoted Wesleyan Methodists in the town.

Seeing that Mr. Jones's ministry was successful at Tredegar, the Antinomian party brought one of their great debaters, called Aaron Brut, from Blaenavon, who entered the house of Richard Evans, and just at the close of Mr. Jones's sermon openly and flatly contradicted him. But Brut was utterly ignorant of his man. Mr. Jones was so strong a defender of Wesleyan doctrines as to become a terror to Antinomians, and Brut, having by far the worst of the discussion, went away crestfallen and defeated. This incident acted as oil upon fire, and the work greatly prospered.

In 1808 the English and Welsh Wesleysans joined together

and erected a small chapel, in which services were held in both languages. This unpretentious plain building became too small, and a new chapel was erected for the English Society, which has been from time to time enlarged, until it now stands as one of the best chapels in the town. The Welsh Society continued to worship in the old building, which was enlarged at considerable cost in 1836, and which is still a fairly good chapel, and the only one the Welsh friends possess in this important town.

Mr. Jones, accompanied probably by the English minister, James Evans, or Joseph Robbins, was the honoured instrument in introducing Methodism into Ebbw Vale. In 1808, a chapel was built for the use of English and Welsh Wesleyans, where they worshipped together for about twenty years. The chapel then becoming too small, the English friends built a large and commodious one, which stands to-day.

It is probable that Methodism was introduced into Nantyglo about the same time, and that the chapel was built in 1806. Some historians of repute give a much later date, but in a table published in the *Eurgrawn*, under the editorship of Mr. Edward Jones himself, in 1829, it is stated that the Nantyglo new chapel was erected in 1806. Here again Welsh and English worshipped together for rather more than twenty years, until the walls were too strait, and a new chapel was built for the English Society.

Mr. Jones was also the first to introduce Wesleyan Methodism into Llanelly, Breconshire, Quaker's Yard, and Hirwain. Mr. Batten, who succeeded Mr. Jones in 1807, extended his work to Llangynydr, Pontypool (Welsh), Pentwynmawr, and Crughowell. He was very materially assisted by Evan Edwards, who was then a local preacher, but who, during Mr. Batten's term, entered the ministry, and was for many years a most faithful servant of the Methodist Connexion.

Merthyr—which was only a small village situated in what was known as ‘The Hill District,’ wild, mountainous, and barren, but full of rich treasure nevertheless, which had only just been tapped—was beginning to attract the attention of the capitalists of the country, and to draw large populations from all parts of the Principality, with not a few from various parts of England. The coal and iron ore lay literally on the surface, and gave names to the respective localities. Dowlais means Du-glais or ‘Black-brook,’ from the old Welsh residents observing that at times the water was black, and calling it by that name. Nantyglo means likewise ‘the coal-brook,’ because the coal was seen in the bed of the brook.

When the Wesleyan missionary heralded the gospel of a free, full, and present salvation from the Vale of Neath to Blaenavon, which was supposed by country people to be all Merthyr, and was often called ‘The Land of Flames’ (Gwlad y Flamiau) from the tongues of flame shot up by the blast furnaces, the population was small but rapidly growing. In 1795 the Gyfarthfa Works, still said to be the largest in the kingdom if not in the world, gave employment to one thousand persons, forged about two hundred tons of iron weekly, and consumed two hundred tons of coal daily. The first Richard Crawshay, who came from Yorkshire, was followed by other of his relatives. A nephew, named Joseph Bailey, hearing of his uncle having acquired fame as a great ironmaster in South Wales, travelled on foot from the north of England all the way to Quaker’s Yard, where, hungry and weary, tattered and shoeless, he chanced to meet Mr. Wayne, his uncle’s manager, who introduced the lad to his relative. The lad soon worked his way up, and ultimately became owner of the Nantyglo Works, and was known to posterity as Sir Joseph Bailey.

The Guest family had come from Broseley, in the county of Stafford, and had succeeded in laying the foundation of one of the largest iron works in the world. A company of Bristol

merchants had failed in a similar enterprise at Rhymney, and were glad to dispose of their works to Mr. Crawshay of Gyfarthfa. Mr. Benjamin Hall, son of Dean Hall of Llandaff, married a daughter of the Iron King, and received as a present from his father-in-law the Rhymney Iron Works. Mr. Benjamin Hall's son became Lord Llanover, a name held in high esteem by Welsh people generally. Plymouth Works were carried on by Mr. A. Hill, a name still honoured by old inhabitants of Merthyr Tydfil; Treforest was worked by one of the Crawshays. The Darbys opened out large works at Ebbw Vale, and the Waynes at Aberdare.

In the year 1810, Merthyr Tydfil became the head of a Welsh Circuit, with David Jones (Beddgelert) and David Evans the stationed ministers. This was a wise arrangement, for shortly afterwards a new chapel was erected for the Welsh Wesleyans, and a period of great prosperity followed, the Society and congregation growing steadily, and in a comparatively short space of time the chapel became too small. In 1819 David Jones, who was mainly instrumental in building this chapel, returned to the Circuit, and almost immediately undertook the task of erecting a gallery. The flowing tide was with them, and the increased accommodation was soon occupied. In 1827, when Edward Anwyl, one of the most devoted, able, and hard-working of the early Methodist preachers, returned to the Circuit, the work of extension was again undertaken, and more than double the number of sittings hitherto provided was the result. It was now one of the largest Wesleyan chapels in the Principality. The Circuit was in a most flourishing condition, and privileged with the ablest preachers of the Welsh pulpit, for from north to south the best men came to Merthyr. In relation to its class-leaders also, the Merthyr Society was singularly fortunate, few Wesleyan churches rejoicing in such an able, influential, and devoted staff. The names of Benjamin Howells, Daniel Daniel, Simon Lewis, William Wilkins, W. Watkins, and

Robert Jones, who became Sheriff of London, and others, are fragrant to the present day. They stood out head and shoulders above their compeers, and were regarded by the inhabitants of the town as true leaders of men. Their intelligence, social position, and exemplary piety gave the Wesleyan Society a status in the town second to none, and there were men of similar distinction and gifts in several other churches of the Circuit.

Nantyglo was also highly favoured in this respect. Benjamin Williams was perhaps the chief instrument in moulding the life and bringing out into the ministry the Rev. Thomas Aubrey, who ranked as one of the most eloquent, able, and powerful among Welsh preachers. A popular and respected Church of England dignitary acknowledged to the writer some time since that he owed more to Benjamin Williams than to any other man. ‘When a young curate in the neighbourhood,’ said he, ‘he took me by the hand, and with all the kindness of a father, assisted me both in my studies and conduct.’

Thomas Thomas, ‘the Storehouse,’ who had joined with the English at Merthyr prior to the introduction of Welsh Methodism there, but afterwards removed to Nantyglo, William Williams, Roger Williams, Thomas Thomas (2nd), Rosser James, Thomas Williams, etc., were all men of great influence and power. Hirwain was likewise privileged with the labours and support of Mr. David Davis, M. Hopkins, and William James. The former was the founder of one of the most highly respected families in the Principality, which was represented in 1891 by the High Sheriff of the county of Glamorgan, and to whom I have the honour of dedicating this book. Mr. Davis was then known as connected with the London House, but removing to Blanegwawr, became largely instrumental in the erection of the Aberdare Chapel in 1850, and the Mountain Ash Chapel in 1866. William James removed from Hirwain to Ebbw Vale, where he exercised his

gifts with great power, and assisted by Thomas Thomas and John Evans established a strong church. At Rhymney there were John Williams, Morgan Bryant, and John Lloyd; at Tredegar, Daniel Lewis, Robert Williams, Thomas Williams, Evan Evans, and Isaac Thomas; at Crughowell, Thomas Williams; and with such a galaxy of strong men, besides a noble band of local preachers, prosperity seemed inevitable. The same characteristics marked the men of the English Societies also.

The English and Welsh Circuits of Merthyr covered practically the same area. They both had chapels at Merthyr, Dowlais, Rhymney, Tredegar, Ebbw Vale, Nantyglo, Blaenau, Llanelly, Crughowell, Aberdare, Beaufort, and more recently at Hirwain, Brynmawr, Sirhowy, Mountain Ash, Aberaman, Quaker's Yard, and Mill Street. Welsh chapels were also erected at Llangynydr as early as 1808, and in after years at Rhigos, Ynysowen, Brynsion, Bedlinog, Pontlottyn, Cefncoed-cymer, Pontypool, and Varteg, and Societies established at Abersychan, Blaenavon, Pentwynmawr, and Glyn Neath. Chapels for the English have been also erected at Troedyrhew, Darren, New Tredegar, Victoria, Waen Llwyd, Abertilly, and Llanelly Hill.

In 1834 the Merthyr Welsh Circuit was divided, Crughowell being the head of the new one, both being prosperous Circuits. The English Circuit was divided in 1852, with Hugh Carter as superintendent of Merthyr, and Brynmawr the head of the new Circuit; and in 1863 it was divided again, Tredegar becoming the designation of the new. In 1872 the latter was still further divided, and the Aberdare Circuit was constituted.

The Merthyr Welsh Circuit was also divided in 1856, with Aberdare at the head of the new Circuit; and again in 1864, when Tredegar became the head.

Both the English and Welsh Circuits of Merthyr Tydfil continued to grow steadily up to the year 1850, but especially

the latter. The superintendency of the celebrated Thomas Aubrey, during the years 1846–49, was perhaps the most prosperous period of his most attractive ministry. The chapels were crowded, the membership exceptionally high, and the popularity of the preacher was rendered still more effective by the ravages of cholera, and the sturdy help contributed by a staff of able preachers and leaders. The Rev. Rowland Hughes, who took the superintendency from Mr. Aubrey, was in many respects his equal, and, indeed, in some his superior. Both men were exceptionally gifted, and stood unrivalled even in the best days of Welsh preaching ; but Mr. Hughes soon entered upon troublous times, and found it difficult to steer the old ship into port. One of his colleagues —a young man of considerable promise, who had won the affections of many of the best families in Merthyr—neglected his duties and appointments in various parts of the Circuit, upon which charges were brought against him to his superintendent. After much forbearance and further inquiry, Mr. Hughes decided to bring the accused face to face with his accusers, but the young man could not or would not meet them. He forthwith resigned his ministry, but not without prejudicing the minds of many families against the superintendent. Immediately following this unpleasant episode, the reform movement began ; other denominations supported the agitators, and the result was most painful. On the platform or in conversation, Mr. Hughes had no rival, and the arguments of his opponents were scattered as chaff before the wind. This was such an annoyance to them, that cowardly weapons were introduced, things were said and done which a man of such noble instincts would not stoop to notice. This action was misinterpreted ; he was accused of autocracy ; the opposition became more intense and widespread, and one of the best Welsh Circuits was completely paralysed. At Merthyr, Tredegar, Aberdare, and Mill Street new chapels were built by the reformers. The part taken by the local

preachers on the side of the young minister already referred to, and the reform agitation, were introduced into the strife, and created a strong prejudice against this invaluable class of workers, which has been felt more or less ever since. These reformers have long since developed into Congregationalists, some of the leaders found their way back to their old homes to close their career, others regretted exceedingly the course they had adopted; while the young minister, not long before his death, came to the writer desirous of returning to the Church of his early choice, but while he was hesitating the summons came, and he was called to give up his stewardship. Thus closed, as a comparative failure, a life which in its beginning was full of buds of promised usefulness and blessing.

Mr. Wilkins, another of the malcontents, a few years before his death, and after an absence from the Wesleyan Church of fifteen years, felt it his duty to return. Those who witnessed the events that marked his readmission will never forget his deep regret over the course he had pursued, the supreme happiness he manifested when reinstated in a Methodist class-meeting, his rich and godly experiences, and his ultimately triumphant death. From the agitation the Circuit gradually declined, and never regained its former position and power. In 1854 the Vale of Neath Railway Company purchased the chapel which stood upon the site where the present Merthyr Station is built, and a magnificent chapel in a central position was built, which is to-day one of the best ornaments of the town. At the opening services in March 1854, Dr. Beaumont, Thomas Aubrey, Rowland Hughes, William Powell, Owen Owen, Robert Williams, John Harding, etc.,—a galaxy of exceptional brilliance,—all took part in a meeting, which was described as one of the most effective ever held in the town. Since that time Merthyr has been favoured with men of remarkable talent and power, and withal faithful, loyal, and generous.

The Society at Merthyr at this period was still rich in its

possession of devout and godly followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. The zeal and generosity and able guidance of Robert Jones, a gifted local preacher and most influential businessman, and who, upon his removal to the Metropolis, was made Sheriff of London in a very few years, were well known and recognized. Timothy Evans, who succeeded him in business; John Rees, who recently passed away, having lived to a good old age; Thomas Lloyd, a most successful Sunday and day-school teacher; William Griffiths, wonderfully gifted in prayer; Daniel Daniel, specially successful as a class-leader; Lewis Morris; and John Lewis, a young man of considerable ability and promise, who was cut down in early life, were all men of mark and strength. There were also many devoted Christian ladies attached to this Society, among whom were Mrs. Jones, who bequeathed a legacy both to the chapel and the poor; Charlotte Daniel, scrupulously conscientious; Sarah Jones, who in all the changes of fashion never forsook the old Methodist bonnet or dress; Sarah Thomas, a second 'Saon, Saon,' whose responses under the preaching of the Word of God, forced out by tears of joy, inspired many a preacher; with Anne Rees of Thomas Street, and Mrs. Rees of Wellington Street, whose gentleness and sweetness are still fragrant.

The efforts of Messrs. Greener, Harpur, Weir, and Goodfellow — four able, devoted local preachers — men in the foremost rank in intelligence, zeal, and position, and who filled with credit public offices of trust and every possible office in the Church, together with Messrs. Griffiths, Williams, Ballard, and others, were unitedly concentrated on the erection of a commodious and beautiful chapel on the old site, which they accomplished in 1863. The Merthyr English Society will long remember the devotion and zeal of Mrs. Greener, Mrs. Goodfellow, Mrs. Ballard, and other Christian ladies. Mr. Pope, an earnest and powerful local preacher, Messrs. Heeley and Hilton of Dowlais, were hearty and generous Wesleyans.

Aberdare Methodism was exceptionally favoured in the

removal of Mr. and Mrs. Davis to Blaengwawr. When a young man at the London House, Merthyr, Mr. Davis began to attend the English chapel at Pontimorlais, but he shortly removed to Hirwain, where he attended the Welsh Wesleyan chapel which had been built in 1822, a short time prior to his settling there. This chapel was shortly enlarged and a good Society formed. The London House became one of the Methodist homes, where all Methodist preachers found most hearty and generous hospitality. Parents and children both were warmly interested in Methodism, not only at Hirwain, but throughout the Circuit, the District, and the Connexion. Mr. Davis, who removed to Aberdare, became one of the pioneers of the coal trade; and in 1850, under his direction, and largely supported by his influence, wisdom, and generosity, a large and handsome chapel was erected, with a minister's house and six cottages, notwithstanding the agitation and the fact that one of his sons had joined the reformers.

Six years later, Aberdare became the head of a new Circuit, and ten years later the Mountain Ash Chapel was built, in connection with which Mr. Davis, Blaengwawr, took a similar interest. In 1878 a chapel at Aberaman was purchased and renovated at considerable cost, and the Aberdare Chapel also renovated. In 1886 a memorial chapel of the Blaengwawr family was erected at Hirwain, the memorial stone being laid by William Roderick, the oldest class-leader, at the special request of Lewis Davis, J.P., who, with his family, was present at the ceremony, and gave a liberal donation to the funds. The devotion, intelligence, and fidelity with which Mr. Delta Davies, F.A.Ph.S., for many years served Methodism in this Circuit as local preacher, Circuit steward, and leader, cannot be too highly estimated. The names of Lewis Lewis, Edward Jones, Thomas Price, William Hopkins, M. Evans, William Istance, David Watkins, and their families, are fragrant with good works, and furnish characters of exceptional attractiveness; while at Hirwain the Bevans, Rees,

Daniel Jones, and William Roderick were plain, robust, strong-principled, straightforward, deeply-rooted Christians. These men were no sickly hothouse plants upon whom the breath of the world left its mark of decay, but stalwart oaks upon whom the strong blasts of nature fell with refreshing effect, giving increased vigour and strength, combining withal the burning passions and zeal of true Celts.

The introduction of Welsh Methodism into Ferndale, Treherbert, and other places in the Rhondda, was undertaken more especially by friends in this Circuit. Mr. David Davies, Pant, who for many years had devoted the whole of his time to the work of the Church, and who with Mr. Delta Davies was at this time Circuit steward, brought the needs of the Rhondda before the Financial District Meeting in September 1867, which that year was held at Cardiff. They succeeded in securing the appointment of Rev. John Hughes (c), then a young man on the President's list of reserve, and the following year a home missionary. In the meantime Mr. Thomas Bevan, the cashier of the Messrs. David Davis & Son's colliery at Ferndale, and John Arthur, one of the most intelligent of working men, who had been brought up a Methodist at Llangranog, on their own responsibility had taken a room in which to hold regular preaching services. The shell of two cottages was eventually erected wherein services were held, which room soon became too small, and a chapel was erected in 1879. This has been substituted by a much larger, more commodious and attractive place of worship. There is now a strong church and a large congregation at Ferndale. A small chapel was also erected at Treherbert in lieu of the long room in which they had worshipped in. Other chapels have been erected at Treorky, which is now the head of the Circuit; Penygraig, Clydach Vale, and Ystrad. The heavy debts on the chapels in this valley has been a great hindrance in the way of their prosperity. The Treorky, like the English Rhondda Circuit, is gathering

strength. The Ferndale Welsh Circuit is one of the most successful in the Welsh work, and with such men as Lewis Davies, Thomas Bevan, John Arthur, William J. Rees, Edward Jones, Jonna Treharne, William Istance, and all the valuable help of Mr. David Davies, who has fathered it from the beginning, a prosperous cause was inevitable. The triumphant deaths of Lewis Davis, W. Istance, and Edward Jones, witnessed by the writer, were amongst the most heavenly manifestations, glorious victories, and blessed seasons of grace it has been our privilege to experience; which we are told was also true with the departure of John Arthur.

In reviewing the work on the eastern side of the old Merthyr Tydfil Circuit, Tredegar English Society was fortunate in having the guidance of good leaders. Mr. Pugh, who joined the Society in the old room, when the Welsh and English worshipped together, and assisted in the erection of the first chapel, and again in its renovation and enlargement in 1854, was one of the most trustworthy, reliable, and godly of the inhabitants of the town. Many a time did he nobly assist the Society Trustees and Circuit out of their difficulties. The Society at Tredegar has ever since been favoured in having some loyal, generous, devoted, and influential families connected with it. Through the efforts of the Messrs. Woodward, Smith, Holmes, Price, and the hard work of the Rev. Philip Collier, then the superintendent of the Tredegar Circuit, the chapel was again enlarged and renovated in 1884, and is now one of the best chapels in the town, in which there is a good Society and Sunday school. The Tredegar Welsh suffered greatly from the agitation of 1850. The best men left the old body and built a reform chapel. In consequence of carelessness on the part of some officer of the church in the guarding of the trust-deed, the reformers managed to mortgage the Wesleyan chapel to the extent of £200, which they claimed as their share of the value of the property, by which, with £270 debt and a Society reduced

from 150 to 30, the church was for many years sadly handicapped. The few faithful Wesleyans struggled on nobly, and, after years of hard toil, gathered strength, paid off the debt, and have since renovated the chapel. The leading reformer was an able man, a very acceptable local preacher, and a man of good social position. He did not live long, and some of his family returned to the Methodist Church. Mr. Robert Williams, who was the mining manager under the Tredegar Iron Company, a man of considerable influence, after twelve years' experience with the reformers, returned to the old home. The deep regret which he expressed on his return on account of the part he had taken in the agitation, he beautifully exemplified in the redoubled diligence, the loyalty, the devotion and generosity with which he served Methodism up to the time of his death, a few years later. The Tredegar Society has been in a healthy state for years. The Rev. David Evans, who entered the ministry from this Society, was for several years the Chairman of the South Wales District, and a minister of considerable ability.

The Rhymney Society, which has been one of the most intelligent Societies of working men, was not led astray by the agitators, but remained faithful to the old body, and suffered but little from the reform agitation. One solitary local preacher constituted the new body, and he very soon found a home in a Congregational church and left the town. This church, which was the spiritual birthplace of the writer, where he began to preach, was made leader, and from which he entered the Wesleyan ministry, has continued a good substantial church up to the present time. John Williams, leader, local preacher, Circuit steward, district treasurer, and frequently representative to Conference, did much in the formation and development of this church, as he did latterly at Aberystwyth, where he spent his closing years. The names of the Bryants, the father and two or three sons, all class-leaders; Abram Jones; David Jones, who afterwards resided

for a time and died at Treorky ; his parents, brothers, sister, and their families, and their children's families, were never surpassed in their zeal and devotion to the Church of their choice. Evans (Evan) was one of the most effective in prayer we ever heard, and a most successful class-leader ; Lewis, John, and William were leaders, while their brothers, sister, and their families were faithful Methodists. The Rev. W. R. Jones, B.D., who has long been an elder in the Episcopal Church, America ; Thomas Phillips, who entered the Wesleyan ministry in 1864, and recently died ; and Daniel Roderick, who is now a popular clergyman, were brought up in this Society. The old chapel erected in 1837 was converted into cottages, and a new one, much larger, more attractive, and in a more central position, was erected at considerable cost in 1871, the debt of which is rapidly disappearing.

The English Society in this town, in which the vernacular is generally spoken, has had many disadvantages to contend with. For many years few English-speaking people lived in the town. Positions of trust have almost invariably been filled by men who were not over-sympathetic with Wesleyan Methodism, or even with Nonconformity. There have been some noble Christians in connection with this Society, who adorned the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thomas Jones, James Davies, Richard Thomas, and John Nelson were men of sterling qualities. The latter was one of the best Bible-class teachers ; his class was instructive, profitable, and spiritual. His Society classes were equally successful.

The introduction of Methodism into Pontlottyn was about the year 1858 ; William Harris and Evan Evans, two good old Methodist class-leaders who removed there, were chiefly instrumental in its introduction. That at Tafarndaibach about the year 1850, when a few good Methodists removed to that place from Llangurig in the Llanidloes Circuit ; David Davies and Lewis Evans were the leaders, and were chiefly instrumental in the erection of the chapel. The cause at

Sirhowy was commenced about the year 1858. The removal of Mr. Thomas Williams, cashier, to that place, who had been a local preacher at Ebbw Vale and Tredegar for years, was soon followed by the formation of a Society, which for years worshipped in a long room, but in 1871 erected a commodious chapel. The services of Mr. Williams to Methodism as preacher, steward, district treasurer, and representative to Conference were many, and were most loyally rendered. During the agitation he was one of the few local preachers in the Circuit who never swerved in his loyalty or services to the Methodist Church. The English Society had been formed at Sirhowy some years before. The Vale Terrace and the New Tredegar Chapels have been built more recently. The latter has been steadily growing, and is now the abode of the second minister in the Circuit, and is likely to become a most important centre.

The Society at Nantyglo, to which we have previously referred, became a centre of activity and formed English and Welsh Societies. In connection with the English Society at Nantyglo, Solomon Chilton was a devoted worker, and Mr. John Swaine, full of zeal and ready for every good work, assisted him. Other good men and women, burning with love to the Master, were devoutly engaged in establishing classes and prayer-meetings in various places throughout the valley. Brynmawr was then a small village, but growing rapidly. Services were held in the house of David Prosser, which soon became too small. The Town Hall was then taken, which was soon filled to overflowing. The cholera was cutting down right and left all over the Hill District, and for a time the people were crowding into every place of worship. The Rev. Joseph Spencer was the young man on the Circuit, and was abundantly blessed in his work; the sainted Joseph Fletcher being the superintendent, with J. W. Cotton as colleague. The Town Hall became too small, and a new chapel was erected at Brynmawr, and a fourth minister appointed to the Circuit.

Mr. Swaine and his co-workers were privileged to see the new chapel at Brynmawr becoming the head of the Circuit in 1853.

About the same time the work was commenced at Blaina. Mrs. Shinton was a religious woman of considerable ability and burning zeal, who, after having the consent of her husband, invited the Wesleyans to hold services in her house. Her husband was a master moulder, and was very soon converted, and for many years became one of the most exemplary Christians in the neighbourhood. Thomas Henscoe became a leader, and they soon attracted others to join them. Charles Sweet was a zealous Baptist, and for several years walked regularly to Brynmawr to worship, but failing to go to his own chapel on very wet Sunday evenings, he occasionally went to hear the Wesleyan preachers, and was one evening converted to God. He made a public confession that he had never experienced a change of heart, notwithstanding that he had for some years professed religion, until he heard the Wesleyan preachers. He soon became an active leader, and continued to live a most useful life. William Ballard was another young man who joined the little Society and became a class-leader and steward. These were whole-hearted, whole-day, whole-week Christians. They were ready to take their picks and to set about cutting the foundation of the chapel, or to hold a prayer-meeting—anything if the cause of Christ could be extended. A good chapel was built and enlarged, and one of the largest congregations in South Wales was gathered in. The work went on steadily growing until the works were stopped, when many were obliged to leave the neighbourhood. The friends are now gathering strength again and are preparing for a new chapel. The Blaina friends assisted in the formation of a Society at Abertillery, where a chapel has been built and recently enlarged, and which is likely to become a most important place. These localities are developing rapidly, and will repay if vigorously supported.

The Brynmawr English Circuit is in a more prosperous

state than it has been for some years, and with Messrs. Roberts, Harrison, and a number of good men and true working heartily together, the Circuit may naturally expect better days and a prosperous future. The death of Mr. MacPherson at an early age was a great loss.

The Nantyglo Welsh Society was equally enterprising. They commenced services in a cottage in Boundary Street occupied by Mary Prosser, at Brynmawr, about the year 1847 or 1848, when the Revs. John Lloyd and Lewis Williams were the ministers in the Circuit. The cottage became too small, and when the English chapel was erected the Welsh Wesleyans rented the Town Hall, where the services were held until the chapel was opened in 1855. The Nantyglo leaders took considerable interest in the daughter Society at Brynmawr; they brought considerable pressure to bear upon Mr. Morgan Morgan, then a young leader at Nantyglo, but living at Brynmawr, to take charge of the Society at the latter place. After some hesitancy, he accepted the position, and ever since he has fathered the church there and the Circuit with fidelity and generosity rarely surpassed. The chapel at Brynmawr owed much to Mr. Morgan Morgan and Thomas Prosser. They devoted time, money, and labour towards its erection and to bring it out of debt. This Circuit suffered considerably from the reform agitation, but not to the same extent as those of Merthyr and Aberdare did. Several of the leading agitators in Wales were in this Circuit, and did their best to spread discord in the Societies. The Rev. Owen Owen, who was the superintendent of the Brynmawr Circuit during the years 1849-51, said, 'Give them rope and they will hang themselves,' which was fully demonstrated ere long. Several of the local preachers left the Wesleyans, and soon after joined the Congregationalists, and a few others went out with the agitators and finally to the world.

The Brynmawr Welsh Chapel was erected soon after the agitation, and was opened for divine worship by the Rev.

Rowland Hughes, Owen Owen, and Henry Wilcox. Mr. Wilcox was the minister who had charge of the erection ; his geniality, persuasiveness, and popularity contributed largely toward the success of the scheme. The cause went on happily for years. Brynmawr eventually became, and still is, the head of the Circuit. The Welsh Society at Blaina never thrived, nevertheless it has had a few most loyal and generous Methodists from the beginning up to the present time. The chapel was built in an out-of-the-way place, and the Welsh language has not been the language of the people in the locality generally for years. The Circuit is doing better latterly, the dissatisfied feeling which for years blighted the energy of ministers and people has died out, and hopeful confidence is manifest throughout the Circuit. The congregational singing at Nantyglo since the days of John Simon has been an element of strength. This church gave the Connexion Thomas Aubrey, one of the most illustrious of Welsh preachers. His sermons were full of deep thought, powerful reasoning ; his language chaste, accompanied with lofty flights of imagination, which opened out new worlds ; while his oratorical powers were most varied and effective,—sometimes tender, pathetic, melting the rock ; other times his ascending cadences and torrents of eloquence carried everything before it. He was great of heart, magnanimous, courteous, courageous, and with all his popularity never lost his child-like heart. He consecrated his great powers to a greatness not his own. He suggested plans for the working of Methodism in the North Wales District, which uplifted it to a higher plane than it had ever been, and which has been faithfully carried out by his colleague and successor, the Rev. Samuel Davies. His passage to the skies was gloriously triumphant, and his name and work will ever remain fragrant. He was one of the greatest of Welsh preachers.

William Powell, who was brought up at Ebbw Vale and began to preach about the same time as Thomas Aubrey, was

a worthy companion and colleague. The Rev. William Batten and Richard Bonner were the Circuit ministers, 1823–24, both being very popular in the Merthyr Tydfil Circuit, and profoundly admired and loved by the two young preachers. The old people used to say that, whether intentionally or otherwise, the young men became very like the two ministers. Mr. Powell, like Mr. Aubrey, was one of the brightest stars in the firmament of the Welsh pulpit. Isaac Disraeli said that ‘every work of genius is tinctured by the feelings, and often originates in the events of times,’ and this was true with regard to William Powell. He was nervous, sensitive, sickly, but wiry. He used to think and feel, and under his hands philosophy became poetry, science, and imagination. In him the celestial fire burned, and changed the flint into transparent crystal, bright and clear. His slender form and pale face drew out the sympathy of his congregation, and his thin, small, tender but penetrative voice, with a minor strain running through it, almost invariably melted his congregation into profuse tears. For sixty years the name of ‘Powell Bach’ acted like magic on the Welsh people, and never lost its charm up to the time of his death. He entered into the sunshine of his Saviour’s smiles, October 15, 1887, nearly twenty years after his youthful companion Thomas Aubrey, who had passed away at Rhyl, November 15, 1867. The memories of these two great and good men are enshrined in the hearts of the Welsh people, who will guard them with sacred watchfulness, and their names will go down to posterity with the purest and best of Welsh preachers.

Several able local preachers have been raised up in this Circuit. The names of Benjamin Williams, William James, John Jones, William Aubrey, a brother of Thomas Aubrey; Benjamin James, Benjamin Davies, Pontypool; John Richards, Thomas Williams, Crughowell, father of the Rev. W. D. Williams; James Allen, D. T. Davies, who went to America and became a leading Methodist at Utica. Delta Davies,

F.A.Ph.S., who for many years has been one of the most highly respected, influential, and devoted Methodist preachers in the Principality, and others, have worked nobly for Christ. Lewis Edwards, too, was most energetic and faithful. His journeyings to and from his appointments, early and late, almost every Sunday, even when an old man, were really wonderful. George Burrows, T. Michael, R. Rhydderch, M. Jones, and William Williams are local preachers, and are doing good work in the Circuit.

Methodism in the Hill District has lived down the most painful opposition, and it has more than held its own. It is respected and fairly prosperous. The Methodist preachers are held in higher esteem than they ever were before, and with a vigorous and persistent effort it has a bright future. It has raised some of the ablest preachers in the Methodist Church, it has had a band of leaders of exceptional strength of character; their names are fragrant, their characters beautiful, and their memories blessed.

CHAPTER XII.

METHODISM IN SWANSEA AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD.

Mr. Wesley's Visits to Swansea, Neath, Gower—Howell Harris—Whitefield—Predestinarianism—The Calvinistic Methodists and the Cryglas Chapel—The Lady Huntingdon's Chapel—The Foundation of the Wesleyan Society—The First Chapel—Thomas Taylor's Ministry in Gower—The Oxwich Wesleyans—Bunkers Hill Chapel—Welsh Wesleyanism—John Hughes—Jones, Bathafarn—High Street Chapel—The Class-Leaders—Trustees—Pontardulais—Mr. and Mrs. Lot, Goetrewen—R. D. Griffith the Missionary—James Buckley—Evan Parry—Neath and Gower Circuits formed—The Neath Society—Chapel—Struggles—Mumbles—Sketty—Morriston, Glandwr—Brunswick—Alexandria Road—Britton Ferry—Neath Abbey—Thomas Llewellyn—Evan Davies—Skewen Chapel—Men of Position and Character connected with the Work, etc.

CONSIDERING that Swansea was by far the most important town in the Principality, it is a mystery that it was not visited by John or Charles Wesley at a much earlier date. On Monday, August 18, 1746, in company with Mr. Hodges, the Rector of Wenvoe, Mr. Wesley rode as far west as Neath. ‘Here,’ he says, ‘I found twelve young men whom I could almost envy. They lived together in one house, and continually gave away whatever they earned above the necessaries of life. Most of them, they told me, were Predestinarians, but so little bigoted to their opinion that they would not suffer a Predestinarian to preach among them, unless he would lay all controversy aside. And on these terms they gladly received those of the opposite opinion.’ The multitude of people was so great that Mr. Wesley was obliged to preach in the street. One man, who found a second in a drunken fiddler, made an attempt at disturbing the service; but Mr.

Wesley's earnest words on 'Repent ye, and believe the gospel,' secured at once the attention and sympathy of the congregation. The 'gentleman' felt ashamed of himself, and stole away on one side and the fiddler on the other, while the preacher exhorted his hearers to repent and trust in God for salvation.

The next morning at five o'clock Mr. Wesley preached again. His soul was delighted when he found that all prejudice had vanished as a dream, and their souls took acquaintance of each other, as having all drank into one Spirit.

Mr. Wesley returned from Ireland, August 1758, in a vessel bound for Wales, on board which he had, 'without the ceremony of naming a text,' enlarged on the nature of the kingdom which is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; which exhortation was accompanied with the power of the Spirit. On the 8th he landed at Penclawdd, and in the morning proceeded to Swansea. No reference is made to his preaching at either Penclawdd or Swansea. It is, however, almost certain, as he stayed on the 9th of August in that town, that he preached there. Assuming that he did so, this must count as his first service in that important town. Mr. Wesley hurried off early the next morning to the Conference which was held at Bristol. Conference over, he joined Mr. Joseph Jones, one of his early preachers, probably a Welshman, who was some time after seized by the pressgang, and they came together, *via* Cardiff, Fonmon, Cowbridge, and Pile, to Neath. When Mr. Wesley entered the latter place he knew not where to go; but, strangely enough, a man fixed his eyes on him, and said to him, 'Sir, that is the house where the preachers put up their horses.' Only a few minutes after, another man came up to him and said, 'Sir, Mrs. Morgan expects you, and I will show you the way.' To Mrs. Morgan's the preachers proceeded, and were very kindly received. She

treated them as if she had been acquainted for twenty years. Being market-day, Mr. Wesley preached in the room, a large, commodious place, to a great crowd of people. There were several backsliders present, who were greatly impressed.

The next day being Sunday, Mr. Wesley and his companion rode to Swansea, which town was reached at seven. They were met on the street by a pious man, who conducted them to his house, and thence to the green court of the old castle, which was surrounded by high walls. Here a large congregation assembled, which behaved with the utmost decency, and ‘an uncommon blessing was among them.’ At five in the afternoon, in the same place, with the congregation more than doubled, and including many ‘gay and well-dressed persons,’ Mr. Wesley again preached with great power. On this occasion he was agreeably surprised to find Mr. Peter Jaco, one of his early Cornish preachers, and who, probably returning to Ireland from Conference, and driven by contrary winds, found shelter in the Swansea port. The comely-looking Cornishman was more than repaid for all the peril and delay by the interesting conversation and companionship of the founder of Methodism.

On the Monday Mr. Wesley had scarcely ever seen such rain in Europe as that which fell in Swansea that morning. In one of the main streets the water ‘ran with a stream capable of turning a mill.’ Mr. Wesley was appointed to preach at Newton, about six miles from Swansea, to which place he proceeded, notwithstanding the rain, and such a number of people came together that no house could contain them. A barn was soon prepared, and it pleased God to send showers of blessing upon their hearts.

On the evening after, preaching again at Swansea, Mr. Wesley met those who desired to join in Society, to whom he explained the nature and design of it, with which, he says, they were quite unacquainted. It was on August 28, 1758, that the first Methodist Society was formed in Swansea, and

on the next day Mr. Wesley went back to Neath, in order to put the Society there (an unlicked mass) into some form. On the previous Saturday the friends at Neath had requested Mr. Wesley to do so, but when he returned on the following Tuesday they seemed to have quite forgotten it, and some of them looked at Mr. Wesley as if they had never seen him before. The cause of this was, that a Mr. Evans, a Presbyterian minister, had turned them upside down. There were, however, five or six who were ashamed of their brethren and of such unmanly conduct.

Mr. Howell Harris had visited Swansea as early as 1742, and possibly on an earlier date. On one occasion he was preaching on an elevation called Cryglas, under a tree, when a man in drink, prompted by others, held out a gun and aimed at the preacher, but could not get the shot to go off. Mr. Harris, with perfect calmness, said to the man, 'Turn it that way, and it will go off at once,' which was verified there and then. Mr. Whitefield visited Swansea in 1743. A copy of a letter which he wrote (probably to Mr. Seward) dated from Swansea, April 12 of that year, we have before us, in which he says: 'Great things are done in Wales. Yesterday I preached at Neath to three thousand people, and here this morning to about four thousand people; the Lord was with me of a truth.' There were several Calvinistic preachers in the vicinity of Swansea at an early date, good men and true, who were very zealous and successful in their work. When Mr. Wesley visited Neath in 1746, he found a number of young men who were Predestinarians, to whom he preached; and as the Calvinistic and Wesleyan Methodist converts met together in the same room, both sides holding strong opposite views, it was difficult to avoid a little friction at times.

Returning from the west of the Principality, Mr. Wesley came to Swansea on Friday, August 26, 1763. The next morning he preached to one or two hundred people, many of whom seemed to be 'full of good desires.' The Society which

Mr. Wesley had formed five years previously had for a time ceased to exist. The explanation of this is, that the Wesleyan and Calvinistic Methodists met together, as they did for years after this in other places. At that time the Society or After-Meetings, which were established in connection with the Methodist revival in Wales, were attracting considerable attention. A Mr. Evans gave Mr. Wesley a description of these meetings, a description which did not leave a favourable impression upon his mind. The repetition of a verse of a hymn thirty or forty times, the violent agitation, the leaping, jumping, etc., were only occasional outbursts, and not essential or even characteristic of the early Society Meetings. Than these meetings, few institutions have done so much for pure religion in the Principality. And, minus the physical demonstration, there is an intense longing in the hearts of all good Christians throughout the country for such Society Meetings again as those held in various parts of Wales during the earlier days of Methodism.

On July 31, 1764, Mr. Wesley, after a long, tiresome, and dangerous journey from Pembroke, *via* Laugharne and Llanstephan and the quicksands of Cefnsidan, crossed over to Oxwich in Gower, where all the people talked English, and were described by Mr. Wesley as the most plain and loving people in Wales, who received the word with all readiness of mind.

Mr. Wesley and the good people of Gower were under a disadvantage on this occasion. Knowing that his friends were scattered up and down the country, he sent two persons on the previous Sunday to give notice of his coming; but to his sad disappointment the messengers had only reached Oxwich about a quarter of an hour before his own arrival. There was no public-house in the place; no house to take him in. The home of the preacher was three miles away; he had not had anything to eat since an early breakfast, and was willing to eat or drink. A poor woman gave him house-

room, but the only refreshment she could offer the great evangelist was a dram of gin ; at another house, that of John Clark, whose son became a local preacher, he procured a dish of tea, and was ‘ much refreshed.’ Mr. Wesley preached that evening and again the next morning, and the close attention of the people left such an impression upon his mind that he did not regret his visit to Gower, notwithstanding the difficulties and disappointments which he experienced on his arrival.

Mr. Wesley had been at Penclawdd and Newton as early as 1758. In January 1762 Thomas Taylor, who was appointed by the previous Conference to travel in Wales, after suffering cold, hunger, thirst, and the most trying hardships, came to Gower, where there seemed a prospect of much good. ‘ The people,’ Mr. Taylor says, ‘ were like heathens ’ ; a description which does not agree with that given by Mr. Wesley. Mr. Taylor goes on to say : ‘ I went down into this miserable country in very cold, rainy weather ; the people flocked to hear, but we were ill-provided with convenient places to preach in. Meantime the rain was excessive and the cold intense, while we had but little fire, so that I put on my wet clothes several days successively, yet without any inconvenience afterwards. Here God blessed my word. I collected several Societies, and many were at this time brought to experience the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins.’ But it is evident that Thomas Taylor, one of the most courageous, zealous, and persistent of Methodist preachers, was the honoured instrument in forming Methodist Societies in Gower, a district which has retained its characteristics and loyalty to Methodism up to the present time. Mr. Wesley visited Swansea, Oxwich, and Neath on Monday and Tuesday, September 7 and 8, 1767. George Story, who was the superintendent of the Wales Circuit the previous year, on his way to Cork called at Swansea, and, hearing that Mr. Wesley was in Gower, proceeded to Oxwich, and was there

in time to preach to the congregation waiting for Mr. Wesley, who had failed to cross the ferry, and was therefore obliged to go round by Swansea. Nearly all the inhabitants of the place came out to hear Mr. Wesley preach the next day. The evening of the same day he rode to Neath, where he preached to a large congregation. Here innumerable lies had been circulated about him and his work, which caused great prejudice against him; but, under his powerful preaching, it ‘all vanished into air, the bigots, tale-bearers, and their followers were all ashamed of themselves, and felt the power of the gospel of love melting their hearts.’

Oxwich was visited by the founder of Methodism again on August 8, 1768, when he pressed home the ‘one thing needful’ to a plain, simple people, ‘right willing to hear, with great enlargement of heart.’ The next day he climbed a steep hill, took a full view of the castle, the loftiest building he had seen in Wales, and from which there was an extensive view by sea and land. The removal of the family from this castle, to bury themselves in a hole at Margam, was to Mr. Wesley a great surprise. He rode to Neath, and was astonished to hear that he was to preach in the church. The minister being dead, the church was at the disposal of the churchwardens, who were more liberal-minded than their rector, and were pleased to place the building at the disposal of Mr. Wesley. The singing, which was kept by twelve or fourteen persons to themselves, disgusted the preacher. The repetition of the same words, and especially the spectacle of different persons using different words at one and the same time, was, he said, an ‘intolerable insult to common sense, and utterly incompatible with any devotion.’

The next morning he had the pleasure of hearing the whole congregation sing with the spirit and the understanding, which gave him great satisfaction. The Welsh people present were not able to sing English. Many of them could not read the language, but some would possibly know the tune

and would be prompted to sing, and with certain tunes words would naturally flow like a stream out of their burning hearts. The repetition of the tune would in most instances be a sure indication of the moving of the waters, a fact which would be hailed by any Welsh preacher as the best demonstration that they were wrought upon by the Spirit of God. In the year 1768 there were fourteen ministers in Wales, each itinerating regularly through the counties of Monmouth, Glamorgan, Brecon, Carmarthen, and Pembroke, and parts of Radnor.

On August 18, 1769, Mr. Wesley came to Oxwich, and thence passed to Swansea. At the latter place an effectual door was opened again. The rain drove the preacher and the people into a room, which, in consequence of its being crowded, was 'as hot as an oven.' The next day he preached at Neath, Bridgend, and Cowbridge, but did not visit this locality again for two years. On Monday, August 26, 1771, he writes: 'We crept through a right Welsh road, and reached Oxwich between twelve and one.' Here he preached to a large congregation which had been waiting some time, and then went on to Swansea. Mr. Wesley probably took this journey to open the new chapel which had been erected in the upper end of the town. 'At six,' he says, 'preached in the yard, as *our room* would contain hardly a third of the people.' The next day he preached at Neath on his way to Cardiff.

On Tuesday, August 25, 1772, he again preached in Swansea to large congregations, but his visit was of short duration to this particular neighbourhood. On Wednesday, August 17, 1774, Mr. Wesley again preached in the castle at Swansea to a large congregation, in which town he also passed the night. Mr. Wesley spent a fortnight in South Wales in the summer of 1775, August 14–29, and probably visited some places in the neighbourhood of Swansea. On July 22 and 23, 1777, he preached at Swansea the first evening and the

next morning, going afterwards to Neath, where he preached later on in the day. On August 24 and 25, 1779, a similar visit was made to Swansea, where he preached the first night and next morning, the same day preaching in the Town Hall, Neath. On May 8 and 9, 1781, Swansea and Neath were again visited. The Society at the latter place had been greatly injured. One lying tongue had set it all on fire, till almost half of the members had been scattered. The offenders and the offended were at the Town Hall, and Mr. Wesley took the opportunity to enforce the words of the apostle, ‘Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking be put away from you, with all malice.’ God sealed His word on many hearts, and Mr. Wesley anticipated better days for Methodism at Neath.

Mr. Wesley passed through the neighbourhood of Swansea hurriedly in 1784, but did not stop to preach anywhere between Carmarthen and Cardiff. On August 26 and 27, 1788, he visited Swansea and Neath again. A multitude of people heard him the first night at Swansea, and the chapel was more than full at five o’clock the next morning. The same day he preached at the new chapel at Neath, and this was probably the opening service of the first Wesleyan chapel in that town.

In Mr. Wesley’s journal no reference is made to another visit to South Wales, but we know that the Principality was favoured with another visit from the great preacher. Soon after the Bristol Conference, 1790, the last attended by Mr. Wesley, he set out for Wales, where Tyerman says he spent three weeks. He preached at Brecon, Pembroke, and from Haverfordwest he wrote to the Rev. Thomas Roberts, M.A., then a young preacher of four years’ standing, whom he had just appointed to Bristol. The Haverfordwest Circuit had been greatly neglected, and Mr. Wesley wished to take Mr. Roberts from Bristol to the Circuit which he said was ‘the most important in Wales.’ In that letter he asks the

young preacher from Bristol to meet him at ‘Cardiff or Cowbridge, or to come to Swansea.’ The probability is that he visited Swansea, Neath, and other places on his way to Cardiff and Cowbridge, from which place he wrote to his niece. This, Mr. Wesley’s last visit to Wales, would be within six months of his death.

In the early history of the Methodist revival in Wales, though there were Calvinists and Evangelical Arminians, in many instances they worshipped together for several years. This was true with regard to Swansea, Neath, and other places. The Rev. John Hughes in his Welsh *History of Calvinistic Methodism in Wales*, referring to Swansea, says ‘that a few people, Welsh and English, met together to pray in a room in Castle Street, but as they differed in their language and sentiments, they divided, and congregations were formed in connection with Wesleyan Methodism, Calvinism, and the Connexion of the Countess of Huntingdon.’ A few remained in the old room in Castle Street, and after struggling in the midst of difficulties for years, they applied to the Countess, who gave instructions that a chapel should be erected, which was done in 1787. For some reason or other, however, this was not opened till 1789, when Rowlands (Llangeitho), Jones (Llangan), and William Taylor were the preachers. The Welsh Methodists were a feeble folk in the town of Swansea, but had a good Society at Llansamlet. About the year 1798, a Mr. David Thomas, at his own cost, built a chapel at Cryglas, which he intended holding in his own hands, but opening to all denominations alike to preach in. Under the influence of Jones (Llangan), the chapel was eventually given over absolutely to the Calvinistic Methodist body, David Thomas himself identifying himself with that branch of the Methodist family.

There is considerable difficulty in deciding whether the Society which was formed by Mr. Wesley in Swansea, August 28, 1758, was the mixed one which met for prayer in Castle

Street or a Wesleyan Society. We are strongly inclined to think that it was the former. Certain it is that five years later he complains that it does not exist as a Wesleyan Society. Services were held in Castle Street room regularly until the opening of the Lady Huntingdon Chapel in 1789. For some time previous to 1771 the Wesleyans formed congregations themselves, and in that year, in the upper end of the town, the first chapel was opened for divine worship. Some years after they removed to a new site known as Bunkers Hill, where a beautiful chapel was erected, which in 1846 was substituted by the present Wesley Chapel, which was, and is, one of the finest chapels in the town.

In consequence of the two sections worshipping together at Neath and the predominance of the Predestinarian section, the Society in that town appeared to be unreliable, changeable, and consequently morally weak. Mr. Wesley opened the new chapel at Neath, August 27, 1788. The old chapel has long been substituted by a handsome and commodious building, which has for years been the head of an important Circuit.

From the appointment of Thomas Taylor in 1761, there were Wesleyan ministers who regularly visited Swansea, Gower, and Neath, several of the ministers making the first named their home. In 1795 Swansea became the head of the Circuit, which in the following year was divided, Cardiff becoming the head of the eastern part of the county of Glamorgan and the whole of the county of Monmouth. Mr. Wesley himself visited Gower several times. Gower is a corruption of Welsh *Gwyr*, from *gwyro*, to deviate, to swerve, and would refer to the deviation of the peninsula from the mainland. Its original Welsh name was Rheged, which implies a promontory running out into the sea. Its English name should be Swervington. Mr. Wesley first landed at Penclawdd, which means Dykesend, and which at that time was the most important port or place of business

on the Gwyr or Louther River. Thomas Taylor succeeded in establishing seven small Societies in Gower. Mr. Wesley visited the peninsula regularly till he failed to ride on horseback and find a road to drive into Gower. The Gowerites on the southern side of the peninsula became attached to Methodism at an early date, and have continued loyal up to the present time. Margaret Harry became the first member of Society at Gower in 1762. She was the grandmother of the Rev. Charles Tucker. Her husband, William Tucker, was instrumental in building the first chapel at Horton. He died December 1826. Joseph Davies became the first leader at Oxwich, who subsequently removed to Swansea. Mr. Greenly at Burry Green, William Tucker of Burry Hall, and George Tucker of Horton were faithful and conscientious exhorters, but would not consent to become local preachers. William Owen of Horton, Captain William Bevan, Porteynon, David Beynon of Middleton, Richard Rowe of Oxwich, all proved stalwart Methodists, and did good service in their day.

Welsh Wesleyan Methodism was introduced into Swansea in 1805. From an early date several Welsh people had worshipped with the English, but in that year the earnest appeal made to Conference by Mr. Cole for ministers able to preach in the vernacular was granted, and a Welsh missionary appointed. The ministers stationed that year on the Swansea Circuit were Thomas Stanley, Joshua Fielden, John Hughes, missionary. Mr. Hughes was not successful in doing much in Swansea itself, nor was he more prosperous at Llanelly, where he did not receive the welcome he anticipated; hence a good deal of his time was spent in Carmarthen. Mr. Thoresby, who was the minister in that year on the Carmarthen English Circuit, failed in health, and Mr. Hughes was asked to take charge of that Circuit, which request he acceded to.

For three years Neath was the head of the Welsh Circuit,

Jones (Bathafarn) and Thomas Thomas being the ministers. The services were occasionally held in the English chapel, Bunkers Hill, and the English chapel at Neath, but most frequently in cottages. The following year William Davies the first was the superintendent, and a very powerful and attractive preacher he proved. In 1811 Jones, Bathafarn, was reappointed to the Neath Circuit. In 1812 Swansea was made the head. During Mr. Jones's superintendency, the chapel in High Street was considerably improved, and an entrance constructed in Tontine Street, in those days considered a respectable part of the town. The first trustees were George Burrall, David Griffith, William Wilkins, William Moyse, Michael Williams, Thomas Jones, William Powell, Townsend Harrison, and Richard Rowe; several of these gentlemen being connected with the English Society. In 1816 a District Meeting was held in Swansea, the Welsh and English being that year in the same district. There was a great deal of preaching, and the services were largely attended and richly blessed. David Morgan of Llangadog began to preach in Swansea in 1811, and for thirty years he adorned the ministry of the Church of his choice. The Pontardulais Chapel was erected during Jones, Bathafarn's, superintendency. The Welsh Societies continued to grow, but not as largely as in other counties. The removal to Swansea of Mr. Watkin Morgan of Llandilo was followed by a period of greater prosperity. The generosity, influence, and devotion of this good man and his wife gave the Wesleyan Society at Tontine Street a new impetus. The Rev. David Evans (1st) was greatly owned of God during his stay in this Circuit. The chapel was filled and a gallery erected, and the united efforts of ministers and people were very successful. Jones, Bathafarn, said that he found the English Methodists most hearty and helpful while in this Circuit. Mr. Charles Nevill, who had removed from the neighbourhood of Chester, was for many years a faithful class-leader, steward, and

Christian worker. The family removed to Llanelly, and quite recently a descendant of this good man was the representative in Parliament of the Carmarthen Boroughs. Mr. Harrison was another leader and active worker.

Job Burrel was for years a leader, steward, and a generous supporter of Methodism. William Green, William Jones, William Plows, C. Cullis were all office-bearers in the old English chapel. Mr. Wilson, a prominent descendant of whom, a magistrate, recently died in Swansea, was a good and true Methodist. Mr. Powell was another generous supporter, upon whom the friends had to fall back for help in times of pressure, and who often assisted in bringing them out of their troubles. Mr. Griffith, who carried on a very prosperous business, and whose house was one of the most hospitable of preachers' homes—one of the most interesting features of the early Methodists—for years took an active part in the church. The Rev. Richard D. Griffith, the celebrated Indian missionary, was brought up in this home. In infancy he was dedicated to God by his parents, and made the subject of solemn and earnest prayer by ministers of the South Wales District, who were entertained in his father's house in Swansea a few days after his birth. He began to preach at an early age, and when still a youth had to choose whether he would engage in a prosperous business, or devote himself to the work of the Christian ministry. The late Rev. James Buckley took a deep interest in the young man, and advised him as to the choice he should make. When nineteen years of age he entered the Theological Institution at Hoxton, and in 1837 he accompanied the Rev. Jonathan Crowther to Madras, and with him and others shared the peril and inconvenience consequent upon the stranding and loss of the vessel on the coast of Coromandel. He was able to preach to the natives in their own language soon after his arrival in India, and by diligent application he soon became an accomplished scholar in Hindu literature. His preaching, both in Tamil

and English, was attractive and useful, and many were the seals of his ministry. He became Chairman of the North Ceylon District, and while closely engaged in maturing plans for the better working of his District, he was disabled by a malady which at the outset threatened to be fatal. A return to England seemed to be the only hope of recovery ; but soon after he had seen his friends, and spent a little time with his family, he was again prostrated by the disease which proved to be his summons to his eternal reward. He died in great peace, June 29, 1856, in the forty-third year of his age, greatly lamented by a large circle of friends, both at home and abroad. His death occurred in the same year as his old and esteemed colleague's, the Rev. Jonathan Crowther. During his missionary life in India he was honoured with a band of men as colleagues which would add lustre to any Church. The names of Drs. Ebenezer E. Jenkins, Kilner, the Revs. John Walton, W. O. Simpson, E. J. Robinson, A. Burgess, D. G. Gogerly will suffice to confirm the statement. The Swansea Society may feel justly proud of sending out one missionary who deserved a first place with such a band of men, a man so greatly beloved and admired by his friends, and who won the confidence and admiration of the Methodist Connexion.

Many of the early Methodist ministers were greatly attached to the Swansea Circuit. The Rev. James Buckley, who was first appointed to Swansea in 1794, returned to the same Circuit in 1824–25–26, and again in 1830–31, and his long stay in the District, taking the Brecon, Haverford-west, and Carmarthen Circuits, with the general interest in the people of South Wales, specially qualified him for the position of Chairman of the District, and his work was crowned with genuine success. This was also true with regard to Joseph Pratton, Joseph Cole, George Baldwin, James Gill, William Church, and others. Swansea has been favoured with preachers of a very high order, the Circuit

taking for many years the leading place in South Wales, Methodistically. The Rev. Evan Parry, who had been twice appointed to Brecon, to Merthyr Tydfil, Pembroke, and other Circuits in the neighbourhood, resided as supernumerary at Swansea for several years, where his firm attachment to Methodism his original, pointed, and often powerful preaching, his genial manner and effective pastoral work, endeared him greatly to all who knew him. His sudden but beautiful death left a deep impression upon the minds of a large circle of friends. In the morning of December 19, 1850, Mr. Parry, then in the sixty-ninth year of his age, and the forty-fifth year of his ministry, left his home, saw several friends, transacted business, returned to his house, and, as he was wont to do before dinner, retired to his bedroom, and was found shortly afterwards in the attitude of prayer, unconscious, and death speedily ensued. He had been active, devoted, successful in life, and was strong in death. He was one of the first-fruits of Welsh Wesleyan Methodism in the Principality, but spent the greater portion of his ministerial life in the English work. Mr. Lot, who lived outside of Swansea, on the way to Pontardulais, was an influential and generous supporter of Methodism. For many years he and Mr. Watkin Morgan, notwithstanding their connection with the Welsh Society, were most deeply interested in everything that pertained to Methodism. Mr. Morgan laid the foundation-stone of the Bridgend and other English chapels, contributing largely in support of such movements. The erection in 1864 of Wesley Chapel, at a cost of £6500, was a gigantic undertaking, which nearly took away the breath of many very good people. Chapels were built very cheaply in the Principality in those days, and a scheme which involved such a large outlay showed great faith on the part of those who promoted it. Many doubted the wisdom of such a course, especially as the old chapel was a very substantial and attractive one; and there is no doubt that the heavy debt

which has handicapped the friends at Wesley has not been helpful to the extension of the work in other parts of the Circuit. The energy of Messrs. Thomas Evans and William Morgan, Brynnant, in connection with the erection, growth, and development of Methodism at Wesley, is well known. There is no doubt that the reform agitation which followed the erection of Wesley considerably blighted their prospects, and threw back the hand of the dial many degrees, retarding the progress of Methodism for years, in the Swansea, Neath, and Gower Circuits, and Llanelly in the adjoining county. In 1862 the eastern section was taken away from Swansea, and formed into a new Circuit, Neath becoming the head. In 1863 the Gower Societies were grouped together, and a new Circuit was formed.

This division necessitated an increase of the ministerial staff from three to five; Swansea and Neath being given each two ministers, and Gower one. Methodism was introduced into the neighbourhood of Mumbles at a comparatively early date. Mr. Wesley himself preached at Newton, to a crowd which no house in the place would contain. For many years the Society continued very small; at one period it was kept alive by two widows. In the early history of our Church, godly women did much to establish and carry on the work of Methodism.

At Sketty, which for natural situation is one of the most delightful suburbs in the country, a small school chapel was erected. The name of the place means ‘below’ or ‘under the hill,’ or ‘at the base of the hill.’ Sketty (*Is-ketti*) is protected by this high hill from the cold east wind, and has a southerly aspect overlooking the beautiful Swansea Bay. The town of Swansea and the Welsh side of the Bristol Channel are visible for many miles on the one hand, with Mumbles on the south-west side; and in clear weather glimpses are obtained of the Devonshire coast.

Mainly to the zeal and generosity of Mrs. Rees and her

family (the widow and children of the late Rev. Robert Rees, who was minister in the Circuit in 1855-57) is Methodism indebted for this beautiful chapel, erected in 1876, in place of the small insignificant one on Sketty Hill, and the old room hired in Cockett Road. John Jones was the founder of Sketty Methodism, the first class-meeting being held in his house.

Turning to the other side of the town, the oldest Society is that of Morriston, which was commenced when the Rev. James Evans was the superintendent of the Circuit. Mr. Evans was instrumental in the introduction of Methodism into several places in the Principality. For a considerable time the Morriston Methodists worshipped in an 'upper room' over the old market-place. A small chapel was erected, and more recently a school and class-rooms have been added, and a minister stationed there. Glandwr is meaningless when called Landore; *Glan* means brink, side, shore; *dwr*, water. The name therefore signifies on or near the water. About the time of the reform agitation, a few zealous Methodists from Cornwall came to Glandwr. They met together in cottages and in other places, held class and prayer meetings, and eventually built a small chapel. The greatest effort of extension in Swansea was undertaken in 1870, when, at a cost of £3500, was erected Brunswick Chapel, since enlarged at an additional cost of £2000, and has become a centre of considerable activity. In many respects it is equal to the parent Society, and in some superior. Swansea took the lead as compared with Cardiff steadily up to the year 1855. About the time of the agitation there was a considerable difference in the membership, Swansea being by far the strongest Circuit; since the above date, both Circuits have made considerable progress, but Cardiff has gone on by leaps and bounds. Welsh Methodism in Swansea had a feeble beginning. The first missionary failed to make much impression. The most prosperous period in its history was

during the years that Mr. and Mrs. Watkin Morgan lived there. The short-sighted policy which allowed the site between the old chapel in Tontine Street and the High Street —offered the trustees for a trifle—to drift into other hands, was disastrous, for it meant that one of the best sites in the town for a Welsh chapel was overshadowed and turned into one of the most objectionable. The blunder was to some extent redeemed in 1884 by a scheme to erect a new chapel in Alexandria Road, in connection with which the Rev. John Jones (G) took a most active part, and under which was secured in a prominent position a commodious place of worship. The opening services of this new chapel, conducted by the Rev. John Evans, Eglwysbach, and the writer, were rich in spiritual blessings. The Society is already a trifle better than in the old chapel, and hopes are entertained that it may grow more rapidly in the future. Mr. Watkin Morgan, who died August 13, 1842, and was buried in the new cemetery, left in his last will five shares which he had held in the Gas Works, to be used in support of Methodism in the Circuit, and a similar sum to the Llandilo Circuit, his native place. His death at the early age of fifty-six was a great loss, not merely to the cause in Swansea, but to Welsh Methodism through South Wales. In addition to being an efficient class-leader, chapel, Society, and Circuit steward, he was District treasurer, and took great interest in Methodism throughout the Principality.

When the Rev. Edward Jones, Bathafarn, was appointed in 1809 to what was called the Neath Circuit, he came to Pontardulais, with Thomas Thomas as his assistant. The previous year he had been stationed on the Llandilo Circuit, and was instrumental in forming several Societies in various places within a few miles of Pontardulais. Pontardulais means the bridge on the black-blue stream. Mr. Jones and his colleagues preached in cottages. One of the first to join the Society through his ministry was Mrs. Hopkins, the mother of Mrs. Lot. Mrs. Hopkins had been brought up in

a Congregational church at Llanelly, the pastor of which was the Rev. Evan Davies, a minister of wider sympathies than many of his brethren in those days. Mrs. Hopkins, when she heard the Wesleyan preacher for herself, notwithstanding all that was said against him and his doctrine, was convinced of sin, and made up her mind to become a Wesleyan. She continued faithful up to the time of her death in 1841. Her daughter, who was born in 1789, was then about twenty years of age. The Methodist preachers were often at their home holding services and receiving the hospitality of the kind family. Like her mother, she became a most zealous Methodist. In 1815 she married Mr. Thomas Braithewaite William Lot, Goetrewen. Mr. Lot hated the Wesleyans, but was persuaded by his wife to hear them for himself, which he did, and soon became one of them. Goetrewen became the preachers' home, and the Lot family most faithful and generous supporters of the cause in the Circuit. Mrs. Lot, who gave a beautiful testimony on her deathbed to the Rev. Lewis Williams (Egryn) and her daughter, passed away in peace, July 16, 1842, and was buried in the Llanedi burying-ground. The Revs. Paul Orchard and David Morgan preached to large congregations in the chapel, while the Rev. Hugh Hughes delivered a funeral sermon the following Sunday, and also wrote a memoir of the deceased lady for the *Eurgrawn*. The Pontardulais Society, after a long struggle with weakness, has been growing of late, and is now in a more promising state than at any previous period. The chapel has passed through alterations many, but recently has given place to a larger and more commodious one.

The Societies at Pontardawe, the bridge on the Tawe, and Ystalyfera are of more recent date. At Ystradgynlais there was a Society and a chapel which, like Aberavon, was given up. At Pontardawe a small chapel was built in an inconvenient place, though on the only possible site (procured from Mr. Jones, Glynmeirch), and in connection with which is a

small burying-ground. A new chapel is greatly needed in this place, as well as the formation of an English Society.

Neath was the first place visited by Mr. Wesley in this locality; as the Methodists, Wesleyans, and Calvinists worshipped together here, considerable fluctuation seemed to be almost inevitable. The Wesleyan Society at Neath was formed on August 29, 1758, although it had only a fluctuating, feeble existence for several years. About the year 1771 the Arminian *versus* Antinomian agitation spread rapidly throughout the Principality, and the people who previously had aimed at uniting and tolerating took sides, and the Wesleyan Societies were formed at Neath and other places on a different basis to that upon which they had worked in earlier days. On August 28 1788, the first Wesleyan chapel in Neath was opened for divine worship by Mr. Wesley, in which sanctuary the old Methodists worshipped and were the recipients of many blessings for years. This chapel passed through several alterations, and was finally sold to the Catholics, and a large and commodious structure erected in its stead. Methodism at Neath speedily assumed, and has since held, an influential position. The names of Lean, Andrews, Hibbert, Hayman, and Richards are all well known and highly respected far beyond the pale of Methodism.

The work was extended to Briton Ferry, where a very pretty little chapel was opened for divine service by Dr. Punshon, and where the second minister has resided for years. The Cwmravon Chapel proved a place of refuge for some of the Welsh Wesleyans who were neglected, and the chapel was given up about the year 1854. The Robertses, a most faithful family of Methodists, who came originally from Cowbridge, held on to the Welsh chapel at Aberavon till they could hold on no longer. An English chapel was soon erected and a Society formed. The Roberts family worked hard and well in connection with every branch of work in

this church, notwithstanding that they preferred the Welsh language. One of the sons is now an active class-leader, local preacher, and Sunday-school teacher at Conway Road Chapel, Cardiff, where he has done good work, and is greatly beloved.

The Welsh Society formed by Jones, Bathafarn, at Neath after a long struggle, for more than twenty years in a dingy and inconvenient room, succeeded in procuring a site near the old abbey, where a good chapel was erected. The Rev. Hugh Hughes, who was the superintendent of the Circuit, Watkin Morgan, and Edward Edwards worked well in connection with the erection of this chapel; they rendered substantial help in raising the money. When the chapel was opened, March 14 and 15, 1835, there were a hundred pounds only left as debt, and the sittings were all let and paid for in advance. The Rev. Hugh Hughes, Evan Edwards, Robert Jones, and Mr. Elijah Warring took part in the dedication services. The erection of the chapel at the abbey meant the withdrawal from Neath, so far as the Welsh services were concerned. The wisdom of this step has frequently been disputed, but it must be admitted that the circumstances at the time were so strong as to almost compel the Wesleyans to take that course. The chapel at the abbey has proved a success from the first. John Hussey became a leading officer and worker in connection with this Society. Thomas Llewellyn, a native of Neath Abbey, was early in life converted to God, entered the ministry in 1836, and for more than half a century took high rank among the preachers of his time, labouring with marked acceptance in some of the most important of the Methodist Circuits. His nobility of character, purity of purpose, and conspicuous ability secured for him an honourable place in the Methodist ministry. He was elected member of the legal hundred, and Chairman of important Districts. He returned to his old home to die, where in strong faith, firm hope, and the consciousness of a

victor, with the words ‘ Precious Jesus,’ ‘ conquest,’ ‘ triumph ’ on his lips, he passed away on July 1, 1889, to his eternal home.

The Rev. Evan Davies was converted at Neath Abbey, and entered the ministry in 1846. He died at Llangollen, January 11, 1877. Mr. Davies was a most acceptable and effective minister of the gospel, greatly beloved by a wide circle of friends, more particularly in North Wales, where he spent the greater part of his ministerial life. The old chapel of 1835 was taken down, and a much larger and better chapel erected in 1880, during the ministry of the Rev. David Evans. The new chapel has already been a great success. There is now a better Society, a larger congregation, a larger number of active workers, than at any period in the history of the church.

Skewen or *Ysgawen*, which means Elderwood, the abundance of which gave that name to the place, is a village which is one with Neath Abbey, and has a neat and attractive chapel for the English to worship in. The Skewen Society, which has been weak, is growing; real progress is being made, and in the course of time it will probably become a strong church.

Methodism has not found so favourable a soil on this side of the country as on the other; Independency has taken a deep root throughout the town and district. Methodism can rejoice in some stalwart Christians, men of faith and action. In addition to those previously mentioned, Mr. William Morgan of Havod and his family, and Thomas Evans and his family, will long remain in affectionate remembrance. In more recent times, no man has done more for Swansea Methodism than Dr. Rawlings, son of the Rev. Charles Rawlings, whose attractive preaching when stationed in Swansea will long be remembered for good. The son’s popularity in the town as a preacher of the gospel and public man is perhaps second to none. Captain Tullack, who was Mayor of the town, and one of its magistrates, R. J. Letcher, J. Buller, H. Hoskin, J. Dyer,

C. H. Quick, J. Shepherd, J. Angel, and others deserve mention here. While the names of Jones, Glynmeirch; John Thomas, Clydach; John Howells, Ystalyfera; John Davies, Pontardawe (who has been cradled in Methodism, and like his father has been faithful and diligent in matters great and small), are not likely to be soon forgotten. There never was a time in the history of Wesleyan Methodism when the prospects were as promising in this locality as at the present day. There is better plant, and better men with larger means and greater hearts, and prosperity on an increasing scale may be safely anticipated.

CHAPTER XIII.

INTRODUCTION OF METHODISM INTO COUNTY OF CARMARTHEN.

Carmarthen—Eminent Men—Jones, Llanddowror—Peter Williams—Mr. Wesley's Visits to Carmarthen, Llanelli, Kidwelly, Laugharne—Sir Thomas Stepney—Llandilo, the Landscape—The Nation under a Cloud—The Arian Controversy—James Wood—James Buckley—Carmarthen made a Circuit—First Members—John Hughes—Jones, Bathafarn—Richard Treffry—Prosperity of Welsh Circuit—Chapels at Mynyddbach, Pontyberem, Llanon, Kidwelly—Welsh Chapels at Carmarthen—Temperance—John Davies—Griffith Hughes—John Williams (2nd)—Thomas Taylor—W. Morgan—Alfred Thomas—The Bagnell Family—Hugh Hughes—St. Clears—Howells, Pant—Llanstephan—Llanelli—Mr. Child—Congregationalism—Kidwelly—Mr. Chivers—Pembrey—Llandilo—Llandovery—Llangadog—Llanybie—Llwynyronen—Brynaman—Mr. Morris—David Morgan—First Missionary Meeting—Hall Street—Mr. Samuel Bevan.

CARMARTHEN is an Anglicised form of Caerfyrrdin. Some derive the name from Myrddin, the *pseudo* prophet and bard, who, it is said, lived in or near the town. Some contend that it is a mutation of *Mor-Myr*, the sea, *din-ddin*, a hill; signifying a fortified hill upon the sea. Others say that it means the ruinous city. Another derivation offered is *Caer-fyrrdyn*, meaning the fortress of ten thousand men. History, however, rejects these explanations. The Kaermyrddin of the Britons is the 'Maridunum,' the city by the sea of Ptolemy, and the 'Muridumum,' the walled city of Antonius. The Rev. Thomas Morgan contends that the Welsh word *Caer* (fortress or wall) was prefixed to it, and hence it was transmuted to its present form. It was in Carmarthen that Bishop Farrar suffered martyrdom in 1555, during the reign of Queen Mary. Dr. Richard Davies had lived in the

immediate neighbourhood of Carmarthen. The celebrated Rhys Pritchard, the ‘Old Vicar’ of Llandovery, lived, worked, and died in this county. Griffith Jones of Llanddowror was for years a burning and shining light, whose influence for good had long been felt in this neighbourhood. Howell Harris visited Carmarthen as early as 1739. The Rev. George Whitefield preached in Carmarthen some time before 1743. Peter Williams, during the time he was a student, from 1739 to 1743, was converted under his preaching in the town of Carmarthen. The Calvinistic Methodists had formed a small Society here, which was placed under the superintendence of a William John, prior to 1745. Whitefield again visited the town, and under his preaching Mr. John Bowen of Ty-gwyn (White House) was converted, and became an active supporter of the Calvinistic Methodist denomination in the town and county for many years. Peter Williams, a high Predestinarian, worked hard for Calvinistic Methodism. The chapel in Water Street was erected on his own land, over which he held full control, and up to the time of his death claimed possession of it, and eventually his widow sold it to the Calvinistic Methodists. With Griffith Jones, Peter Williams, and the Welsh hymnologist William Williams of Pantycelyn, all in the county; Howell Harris near and often preaching in various parts of it; Whitefield, too, with his burning eloquence frequently within its borders; with the greater fire burning at Llangeitho in the adjoining county, it was only natural that the Calvinistic wave of the Methodist revival should spread through and take a firm hold in this county. Mr. Wesley intended visiting Carmarthen in the month of August 1746, but in consequence of a mistake in giving notice, he altered his plans and went into Radnorshire and Hertfordshire instead. Why the visit should have been deferred for seventeen years is an unsolved problem. It is, however, very probable that Mr. Wesley knew well that Antinomian views

were held by many of the leaders of the Methodist revival on that side of the Principality, and that he purposely avoided even the appearance of rivalry or controversy.

It was in the month of August 1763 that Mr. Wesley travelled through the counties of Monmouth and Brecon, passing through Trecastle, which tract of country for fifty miles, he said, ‘cannot be rivalled in all England.’ Thus he reached the county of Carmarthen, which, he says, ‘if not so pleasant,’ is ‘at least as fruitful.’ It was about five o’clock on a summer evening when he arrived in the town of Carmarthen, and preached on the Green to a large number of deeply solemn people. Here he was joined by two gentlemen from Pembroke, who had probably come to meet him, and with them he rode as far as St. Clears, where he intended spending the night; but as no accommodation could be found here, the little company went on towards Laugharne (Tal-Llacharn or Talcoran ; *tal*, end, *corafon*, a rivulet). It was then dark, and neither Mr. Wesley nor his companions knew the road. He, however, was gratified to fall in with an ‘honest man on the way,’ who guided him safely to his destination. Here he spent the night. The next day being Sunday, notwithstanding the heavy rain he pressed on to Tenby. On the following Friday, August 26, he rode through heavy rain to St. Clears, and then through greater difficulties to Llanellos—or rather Llanelly, and Swansea. The next time he visited Carmarthen he came from Cardiganshire, on July 27, 1764, but only stayed in the town in order to take a bait on his way west. On the following Tuesday he returned, and after making another attempt at crossing the Llanstephan Ferry, he came to the conclusion that the most sensible way to travel from Pembroke to Swansea is *via* Carmarthen town. Some man told him that it was easy to pass over the sands. Mr. Wesley, however, soon found that there were streams and quicksands, and fortunately a guide came in his way or he would have been ‘probably swallowed.’ We have no

references to any services being held by him in or near Carmarthen on this visit. It is strange that the good people of the town and county of Carmarthen were so slow in taking hold of the great Apostle of Methodism, and that they were unable to appreciate the day of their visitation. More than three years elapsed before Carmarthen was visited again. Leaving Brecon on Monday, September 31, 1767, Mr. Wesley rode to Carmarthen, and a little before six went down to the Green, where he preached to a large congregation, most of his hearers being poor people. They listened with greediness; ‘and though I was faint and weary when I began,’ says Mr. Wesley, ‘I was soon as a giant refreshed with wine.’ Returning from Pembrokeshire on the following Monday, he preached on the Green in the town of Carmarthen, on the ‘Balm of Gilead,’ after which he went on to Swansea.

In the month of August 1768 Mr. Wesley preached at Llanelly to a small earnest company on ‘Ye are saved through faith.’ It was his custom to visit Wales immediately after the Conference. On Friday, August 11, 1769, from the abbey he rode to Carmarthen through heavy rain. Mr. Peter Williams offered him his preaching-house, in which he preached on ‘God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.’

At that time Peter Williams was at the height of his fame. He had been converted under the preaching of Whitefield when a student; he had received deacon’s orders, and served as curate at Cowin Church, near Laugharne, at Swansea, and Llangranog in Cardiganshire, from each of which he had been discharged on account of his religious zeal. The bishop had declined to admit him into priest’s orders, and finding that his sphere of usefulness was becoming very contracted, he went over to the Methodists, and became during many years one of the most powerful preachers of the Calvinistic denomination in Wales. The treatment he received at Llanrwst and other places, especially in North Wales, is

too disgusting to be recorded. Dr. Rees says that he greatly excelled all his Methodist brethren, both clerical and lay, as a preacher, in the preparation, arrangement, and compactness of his sermons. Mr. Wesley preached in his chapel when he was on the eve of publishing the first edition of his Family Bible, which in a few years went through three editions, and eventually found its way into almost every home in Wales.

We can easily imagine Peter Williams consulting the great Apostle of Methodism with regard to the production of this book, and that notwithstanding the different views held by them respecting Calvinism, that Peter Williams would receive Mr. Wesley's good wishes and counsel.

Returning from Haverfordwest on Thursday, August 17, 1769, Mr. Wesley preached in the castle, Carmarthen, at mid-day, and in the evening at Llanelly. Previous to this visit, four or five of Sir Thomas Stepney's household of the latter place had joined the Wesleyan Methodist Society. This had caused considerable conversation if not agitation in the neighbourhood. Wesleyan Methodists were looked upon as heretics; they were classified as Unitarians; because they believed in 'the power of man' (*gallu dyn*), which was on every lip, as the one conclusive proof of the truth of this. Great prejudice existed against these few people who had joined this Society, and probably against Sir Thomas himself, who was a model landlord, and sympathised largely with his people. But the good people who had joined the Wesleyan Society used the most effective weapon to be wielded in that day or in this. They lived godly lives, and by so doing removed all prejudice and won the confidence of their master and the public, being a pattern to all of their rank, 'truly adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour.' As of the early Christians it was true of the early Methodists, especially so in this instance. They carried their credentials in the new life which they lived, and demonstrated its principles in words and actions before all men.

On August 19, 1771, Mr. Wesley visited Carmarthen again,

and in consequence of the heavy rain he was obliged to preach indoors. On the following Monday, returning from Pembrokeshire, he preached in a large church at Llanelly, which was in a very dilapidated state. The congregation was large, chiefly Welsh people. Most of them seemed to understand what they heard, and were favourably impressed. There is no doubt that Mr. Wesley's preaching was plain and pointed. On Monday, August 17, 1772, Mr. Wesley again preached in the castle at Carmarthen, and also that day week on his way to Swansea at Llanelly.

On Thursday, August 18, 1774, Mr. Wesley wrote in his journal :—

'I went on to Llanelly, but what a change was there ! Sir Thomas Stepney, the father of the poor, was dead ; cut down in the strength of his years. So the family was broke up, and Wilfred Colley, his butler, the father of the Society, obliged to remove. Soon after, John Deer, who was next to him in usefulness, was taken to Abraham's bosom. But just then Colonel St. Leger in the neighbourhood sent to Galway for Lieutenant Cook to come and put his house in repair and manage his estate. So another is brought, just in time to supply the place of Wilfred Colley. I preached at five near Sister Deer's door to a good company of plain country people, and then rode over to the old ruinous house, which Mr. Cook is making all haste to repair. It is not unlike old Mr. Gwynne's house at Garth, having a few large handsome rooms. It is situated much like that; only not quite so low, for it has the command of a well-cultivated vale, and of the fruitable side of the opposite mountain.'

There is no doubt that the influence of his butler and other servants on the mind of Sir Thomas Stepney had been of such a favourable character, that he sympathised greatly with Methodism and with every good work, and had won the distinction of being the 'father of the poor.' And probably if he had been spared a few years longer he would have rendered substantial assistance to Methodism in various ways.

On Friday the 19th, Mr. Wesley and his companion rode to Laugharne, reaching Pembroke that afternoon. On Tuesday the 23rd, he returned and called at New Inn, near Llandilo. Probably Mr. Wesley preached in or near the Congregational church at New Inn. The Congregationalists had several strong churches in the county as early as 1715, not many miles from Llandilo, some of which held Arminian views.

On Saturday, August 19, 1775, Mr. Wesley again visited Carmarthen, over which during the year there had come a spiritual change which greatly encouraged him. ‘The wilderness,’ he writes, ‘had become a fruitful field. A year ago I knew no one in this town who had any desire of fleeing from the wrath to come, and now we have eighty persons in Society. It is true, not many of them are awakened; but they have broke off their outward sins. Now let us try whether it be not possible to prevent the greater part of these from drawing back.’ Other localities in the county were visited, at which Mr. Wesley preached, but as nothing transpired to attract his attention, the names of the places are not given.

Two years later, on Saturday, July 12, 1777, Mr. Wesley came to Llandilo and viewed the park, which he says was one of the pleasantest he had ever seen. ‘It is,’ he writes, ‘so finely watered by the winding river, running through and round the gently rising hills. Near one side of it, on the top of a high eminence, is the old castle, a venerable pile, at least as old as William the Conqueror, and majestic though in ruins.’ No reference is made to Mr. Wesley’s preaching at Llandilo, but his biographer says that he was preaching three and four times a day at inns, lanes, by-ways, cottages, and by firesides; and we can hardly think of him spending his time in the park at Llandilo without availing himself, formally or otherwise, of the opportunity of calling sinners to repentance. He had, immediately prior to this period, been

visiting and interesting himself on behalf of Dr. Dodd, who for some time figured as a public opponent of the Methodists ; but now that he was condemned to death, John Wesley with all his heart befriended the criminal divine. Leaving Llandilo he proceeded to Carmarthen, and that evening preached to a large congregation in the market-place. He afterwards discovered that the Mayor had sent two constables to prevent him preaching there, but their hearts failed them, and Mr. Wesley found great freedom in preaching a free gospel to those people.

On the Sunday he heard a plain useful sermon from the vicar, and preached himself during the day to huge congregations, who seemed to be greatly impressed. Returning from Pembrokeshire on the 21st, he preached at Carmarthen in the market-place to a large congregation, and his heart was enlarged so that he continued preaching for a full hour. In his early history he would preach for an hour, or even two hours, with ease, but latterly he preached very short sermons. He very probably preached again at five the next morning, at Llanelly at one, and Swansea in the evening.

Carmarthen was visited again on Saturday, August 14, 1779. Mr. Wesley preached that evening, and again on the Sunday morning, in the new preaching-house which contained the congregation, but in the evening the congregation was the largest he had ever seen in Wales ; and he preached on the story of the Pharisee and the Publican, and many were constrained to cry out, ‘ God be merciful to me a sinner.’ On the following Monday he preached again to a serious congregation in the market-place, the new chapel being too small to contain the people. Many were in tears, the words were made sharper than a two-edged sword, and the work of grace was felt largely throughout the town and neighbourhood. On his way to Llywngwair, in company with Mr. Broadbent, a few miles out of town, ‘ one of the horses began to kick and

flounce till he got one of his legs over the pole and damaging the chaise, in consequence of which they were considerably delayed, but beyond that no hurt was inflicted on man or beast.' Returning from Haverfordwest, Carmarthen was reached on the 23rd, and Mr. Wesley preached in the market-place, and again the next morning. Here Mr. Wesley refers to consternation caused by reports which flew on every side, which must have given him great anxiety. The year was one of national alarm. Lord North and his colleagues were accused of being intermeddling, short-sighted, and incapable. American agents were busy with Irish malcontents, and armed associations, not the most loyal, were found in Dublin and throughout the country. The Spanish Ambassador had left London after delivering to the Secretary of State a hostile manifesto. Press warrants were issued in all directions, and pressgangs actively employed in increasing the navy. Reports of invasion were heard of everywhere. Great dissatisfaction was felt with the Government. The American War had added sixty-three millions to the National Debt. Charles Fox declared that treachery, not ignorance, must have prevailed in the national councils. England was in a state of panic. At Haverfordwest on the previous Friday, Mr. Wesley had held a noonday prayer-meeting to intercede for the king and country. In London, Thomas Taylor says they kept a fast on account of public affairs,—at one a sacramental service, and in the evening a watchnight. The year was one of unrest in the Church. Voltaire had passed away on the 30th May. Mr. Wesley had been pained in consequence of an effort made by one of the chaplains of George III. to publish in a collected form the works of the great sceptic. While there was a great revival going on at Huddersfield, and other places in the north, many little disappointments and disturbances existed in other places. The City Road Chapel had been opened, the pulpit of which was occupied

almost exclusively by ordained clergymen, which several of the itinerant preachers appointed to London did not like. Mr. Charles Wesley was prejudiced in favour of the clergy. Thomas Maxfield, who had been for some time out of the Connexion, had expressed a wish to return, to which Mr. Wesley objected. A party existed among the preachers who wished for total separation from the Church, and the formation of an independent body. Bath, which was then included in the Bristol Circuit, was the scene of an agitation in which Alexander M'Nab, one of the most powerful orators, and Edward Smyth, were the principal actors—an agitation which caused confusion and tore to pieces the Society in that city and in other places. The year, too, was one in which the open-air services and other distinctly Methodist institutions were greatly neglected.

Carmarthen itself had been the scene of much heart-burning. Peter Williams's Family Bible, which was published in 1770, had caused considerable feeling. In his note on the first chapter of the Gospel of St. John, the author had made use of an expression which, in the opinion of some persons in the Calvinistic Connexion, amounted to *Sebelianism*. In 1779 a second edition was published, which gave new life to the agitation in Wales. Mr. Wesley had preached in Peter Williams's chapel, and notwithstanding that he held opposite views, the opponents of Peter Williams would probably endeavour to accuse Wesley of heresy. The agitation continued for twenty years, but was prevented from coming to an open rupture until after the death of Rowlands (Llangeitho) and Williams (Pantycelyn). Soon after their removal in 1790, Peter Williams was expelled from the Calvinistic Methodist body. He had been chiefly instrumental in the erection of the chapel in Water Street, which was on his own land, and was held by him up to the time of his death in 1796. A controversy had been carried on in the town of

Carmarthen, in which Arians, Arminians, and Calvinists had been engaged. The orthodox ministers condemned the negative style of discourse which certain preachers adopted, and which they characterized as lectures on moral philosophy, rather than preaching Christ. Dr. Jenkins of Carmarthen wrote a protest, which was replied to by Dr. Benjamin Davies; the result was the total separation of the parties, which eventually brought the wranglings to an end, but not without doing much injury to many flourishing congregations in the Principality. It does not require any stretch of imagination to realize that under these circumstances Mr. Wesley found ‘deep consternation and terrible reports which flew on every side.’ The appropriateness of his subject—‘Say ye unto the righteous it shall be well with him’—made it a word in season to those who heard the great evangelist, and the discourse was generally appreciated. Mr. Wesley preached about eight in the morning to a ‘civil and unaffected congregation’ at Kidwelly; in the afternoon at Llanelly, at the end of the churchyard; and in the evening at Swansea.

In April 1781 (Wednesday, 25th) Mr. Wesley again visited Carmarthen; Joseph Bradford, his now faithful companion, he had left ill at Bailie, Defynog. He preached to a serious congregation on ‘how He commandeth all men everywhere to repent.’

Returning on the 7th of May he preached to a large and attentive congregation at Carmarthen, and probably the next morning, and later in the day at Llanelly.

Carmarthen was not visited again by Mr. Wesley till Friday, August 11, 1784. After preaching, he suggested to his audience that they should copy the Hollanders in and after public worship. ‘They all took my advice,’ writes Mr. Wesley. ‘None opened their lips till they came to the open air.’ There is no doubt that this advice was a mild way of calling attention to a habit which has been more or less

characteristic of congregations in Wales, namely, the readiness of many to enter into conversation on other matters in the house of God, evidence of a lack of devotion in the services the great evangelist was pretty sure to resent. On the 22nd, returning from Pembrokeshire, he came to Carmarthen, where he heard the Assize sermon ; preaching himself the evening of the same day in the market-place with great power to the largest congregation he had ever seen in Wales. He probably preached also in Carmarthen the next day, calling at Llanelly on his way to Swansea and Cardiff.

This was a marvellous year in many respects—the year Mr. Wesley ordained Dr. Coke and Asbury for the great work in America ; the year the Deed of Declaration was effected, in consequence of which five ministers left Wesley ; and the year William Black began his work in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Wesley did not visit Carmarthen again till 1788, when on Monday, August 18, he travelled from Brecon to Carmarthen, and in the evening of that day preached in the new chapel, as he did again on the following morning. On the 25th he spent another agreeable night at Carmarthen. The next day he preached at Kidwelly at nine, Llanelly at noon, when all the gentry in the town had come to hear him. In August 1790 Mr. Wesley was once more in Wales, where he spent three weeks, and probably preached at Carmarthen, Llanelly, and other places on this his last visit to the Principality.

Carmarthen was included in the Haverfordwest Circuit up to the year 1805, when it became the head of a new Circuit. Ministers were regularly appointed to Wales after the year 1765, and Carmarthen would share in their ministrations. Thomas Taylor visited several places in this county prior to that date. Thomas Newall was the first minister stationed in the western part of the Principality. In 1773 Richard Whatcoat was the superintendent of the Circuit, and in

1775 Samuel Bradburn, afterwards President of the Conference, and who at that time was a great and attractive preacher. The following year James Wood, who also filled the chair of the Conference twice with great credit, was the superintendent of the Circuit. When Mr. Wood was announced to speak in the town of Carmarthen he was threatened with the stocks if he ventured to do so. Preach, however, he did, but without having to endure the threatened penal consequences. The chief magistrate, though bold enough to endeavour to terrorise the preacher, lost his courage and failed to execute his threat, and the preacher, who was strong in the strength which God supplies, had a large congregation, to whom he delivered a most able and impressive discourse. As the result of that meeting many who came to see the preacher in the stocks were convinced of sin, were delivered from its bondage, and became faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. The incident was overruled for good. Satan lost several followers, and the chief magistrate lost the confidence of many even of his own supporters. James Wood refers to the Calvinism of Wales as being the greatest difficulty which at that time he and his co-workers had to contend with.

In 1795 James Buckley came to Llanelly, then included in the Glamorganshire Circuit. On his first visit he was attended with a remarkable deliverance. In the neighbourhood of Longher he had to cross a small arm of the sea, which was fordable at low water. A person whom he saw told him he might cross with safety, and directed him to keep a certain object steadily in view. Mr. Buckley had not proceeded many yards, when the water became so deep and the current so strong, that he was carried downwards above a quarter of a mile before he reached the other side; and he then found only soft mud, insufficient to bear his weight. Happily, a person who was perfectly acquainted with the

place saw him, called him to stand still, and then hastened to him and guided him out of his most difficult and perilous position. Completely wet, and covered with sand and mud, he got over the remaining four miles of his journey as quickly as possible, and rejoiced to find himself under the hospitable roof of Mr. Child. The Rev. Thomas Roberts was the superintendent of the Western Circuit, which included Carmarthen and Pembrokeshire, where he had remained a fourth year.

In 1795 James Buckley was appointed to the Pembrokeshire Circuit. During those years, next to Haverfordwest, Carmarthen was the most important Society in the Circuit. On a list of members which I have now before me in an old Circuit book presented by Mr. Wesley himself for the use of the Circuit in 1781, we have the names, state, residences, and occupations of the Society in Carmarthen. The first name is that of Thomas Williams of Dam Street, hat maker, followed by that of Francis Thomas and Eliza Davies, and forty-nine others. The early leaders were Thomas Morgan, a fisherman living at the Bank; William Lewis, carpenter, Priory Street; and during the successive years, Richard Thomas, Charles Jones, Thomas Walters, Susan Lewis, and Anne Thomas. About the beginning of the present century the names of David Brigstock and William Phillips were substituted in place of others who had probably gone to their rest. The name of John Bagnell, who had been in the ministry for a short time, but who had entered business in the town of Carmarthen, is found on the list—a name which has been prominently and honourably connected with Wesleyan Methodism in the town and district from that time to the present. The name of Nott, probably a relative of the General whose monument is a prominent figure in the county town, is also on the list. In 1805 Carmarthen became the head of a Circuit with one minister, the first

superintendent being William Thoresby, whose health giving way, he was unable to attend to his work in the Circuit. That year John Hughes had been appointed as Welsh missionary to Swansea, but found so much to discourage him that he was glad to be sent to Carmarthen to take charge of Wesleyan Methodism, Welsh and English, in that town. He had previously worked in the same sphere when it formed part of the Haverfordwest Circuit, and was well known to the friends in Carmarthen. Mr. Hughes preached in the English language in the chapel and to the Welsh people in cottages. It is doubtful if any attempt was made to establish a Welsh Society in the town, notwithstanding that several of those connected with the English Society were more conversant in the vernacular. In 1807 Jones (Bathafarn) and William Davies (Africa) visited Carmarthen and preached in the English chapel, and they were pressed to form a Welsh Society in the town. In 1808 a Society was formed and included in the Llandilo Circuit, Jones (Bathafarn) being the superintendent, with David Rodgers as his colleague. All the services were held in the English chapel, and some of those who became the class-leaders of the Welsh Society had been for some time previously connected with the English church. The following year Carmarthen became the head of a Welsh Circuit with two ministers, Jones (Bathafarn) being the superintendent, Richard Treffry having charge of the English Circuit. Welsh Wesleyan Methodism had been most wonderfully successful in North Wales, and was spreading rapidly in South Wales; but in Carmarthen the progress was slow, and Mr. Jones, who had seen such great things accomplished in the Northern Circuits, was disappointed with the comparatively small success in this town. ‘Our enemies,’ he said, ‘prophesied that we should only hold on for two years in the north and utterly fail in the south.’ Carmarthen was one of the most influential towns in the Principality,

and many of its most prominent inhabitants were strongly opposed to Wesleyan Methodism. The introduction of English Methodism they particularly ignored. They looked upon it as an exotic, and to see a few half-despised Englishmen identifying themselves with that body was not of great concern to them ; but if Methodism was to be introduced into the vernacular, and to take its place as a permanent fixture in Calvinistic Wales, it was a most serious matter, and their bounden duty was to nip it in the bud. For a time they succeeded, and the Welsh preachers were disheartened. Mr. Richard Instance, David Brigstock, Joshua Lewis, and Lewis Lewis, who had been brought in through the instrumentality of the English preaching, and for several years had been connected with the English Society, took up the Welsh Society, laboured indefatigably with the Welsh ministers, and before the end of Mr. Jones's (Bathafarn) superintendency, they were blessed with a great revival of religion, and many were in Methodist meetings inquiring the way to Zion. The first year they reported 110 full members. In 1810, the following year, they reported 229. The third year, 276. In 1810 the first chapel was erected at St. Clears, and during the same year a second opened for divine service at Llanstephan. At St. Clears a prosperous Society was soon formed. It was located within a mile or so of Llanddowror, the scene of Griffith Jones's labours, the very atmosphere being full of religious sentiment, and many of the most influential families identified themselves with the Wesleyan Church. John Bryan succeeded his old friend Edward Jones as superintendent of the Welsh Circuit, whilst Joseph Cole and Thomas Roberts were on the English Circuit, all men of great power, very popular preachers, and soon Methodism seemed to be taking a firm hold of the people and steadily growing. In 1813 a chapel was erected at Mynyddbach ; in the following year one was completed at

Pontyberem and another at Llanon, and in 1816 a chapel at Kidwelly.

Both Societies were now doing well, several leading families were connected with Wesleyan Methodism in the town and other places in the Circuit, and the spirit of toleration became more manifest among other Churches in their dealings with the Wesleyans.

One disadvantage which with their prosperity increased, was the fact that they only had one chapel in which to conduct Welsh and English services. The chapel was erected and used by the latter long before the Welsh section was formed. The English felt that they had the first claim, and the Welsh section were only allowed the use of the chapel in the afternoon of the Sunday. This was a great inconvenience to the Welsh ministers, who would have to walk six miles after the morning service, and eight after the afternoon service for that of the evening. They were also cramped for room. The Rev. Lot Hughes cut the gordian knot by saying he would stay in the town and preach in the open air, and he took his stand near the cross where good Bishop Farrar had been martyred. The next time he was planned, he did the same, and at the close of the service there were several inquirers. The work went on through the winter, and eighty were added to the church. It was now found essential that a chapel should be erected specially for the Welsh worshippers, and in 1824 a new sanctuary was dedicated by the Rev. Owen Rees, John Williams (1st), Thomas Thomas, David Jones, and Richard Bonner. The chapel was convenient and commodious, with a burying-ground attached to it, and the work went on progressing steadily for many years. The Carmarthen Circuit soon became one of the pleasantest in the Welsh work, and was fortunate in securing a succession of the choicest of Welsh preachers. Hugh Hughes and Dr. Jones were appointed three times to this Circuit; while John

Davies, Griffith Hughes, John Williams, and Evan Richards were each appointed twice.

Carmarthen and the district immediately around possesses charms which can be equalled by few important centres in a Principality richly endowed by Nature. The magnificent Vale of Towy, extending in an easterly direction to Llandilo, 'lends enchantment to the view,' and to the west is the resplendent river, tidal towards Llanstephan, and modestly touching the fringe of the town on its homeward journey. There are varied fields of emerald hue, with the Myrddin hills on one side, protecting the vale from the chilling north and the blighting east winds; and on the other, the golden grove, with its fine plantations, furnishes an appropriate background for the picture. On either side of the valley, antiquated and modern mansions are picturesquely blended, and the landscape as a whole is so pleasant to the eye that one feels no surprise at the popularity of the town as a residential resort. And though Carmarthen has gained by modern improvements, its beauties were appreciated in the early days of the century, and not least by the pioneers of Methodism.

Thomas Roberts, W. E. Miller, James Buckley, and many others, after a residence here, were reinvigorated and able to undertake their work with renewed strength in other and more important spheres; and in those days many of the leading families in the town were connected with Methodism.

The first Temperance Society in Carmarthen was formed through the instrumentality of the Rev. John Davies, who was the superintendent of the Circuit, and for several years the Chairman of the District. After he had made an experiment of total abstinence for a year, he signed the pledge on August 27, 1836, and led the temperance van in the town and country during the first three or four years of its existence. Mr. Charles Jones, currier, an active Wesleyan,

a leading townsman and some time chief magistrate, identified himself with Mr. Davies. The Rev. Joshua Lewis, then a young man at college, but who afterwards acquired a position as one of the leading Congregational ministers in the Principality, also became an active supporter of the new crusade ; and when Mr. Davies was about to leave the town, he was presented with a handsome testimonial. The first anniversary was held at Water Street Chapel in 1838, when Mr. Davies and Mr. Jones and other gentlemen took part in the meeting, at the close of which 150 signed the pledge, and before the end of the week the number had reached 300. In 1843, when the Rev. Griffith Hughes, a burning temperance enthusiast and one of the best speakers on the temperance platform, was in Carmarthen, a great temperance demonstration was held on Myrddin Hill. Charles Jones was in the chair, and Mr. Hughes and others addressed an immense crowd of people, and this first temperance open-air meeting was made a blessing to many. Although there were some who took up a strong opposition against the temperance movement, the fact that so many influential and leading men were the principal workers gave it an honourable place at the very beginning. The Rev. David Williams, known in Wales because of his powerful preaching as ‘The King,’ writing the biography of his brother the Rev. John Williams (2nd), who died in 1834 during the third year of his superintendency of the Carmarthen Circuit,¹ referring to the Methodist people of that town, said that he could not think of any other body of people in the Principality where his brother’s family would be surrounded by more sympathy, affection, and consideration than those of the Methodist Societies in that town and Circuit. He was not sure that there was any other place like it. The Rev. Hugh Hughes mentions the names of Thomas Taylor and William Morgan, both men of means and great

¹ Eurgrawn, 1840.

influence, who considered the ministers, Welsh and English, with their families, as a special charge, and which they considered a great privilege. They supplied the ministers with two, and often three, horses regularly Sunday after Sunday for years, enabling them thereby to preach in three places each Sunday. Mr. Alfred Thomas of Wellfield and his devoted wife rendered invaluable service to Methodism for many years. Up to the time of his death in March 1853, Mr. Thomas was looked up to by all as one of the best, most generous and influential gentlemen in the town. Mr. Alfred Thomas believed in immersion, and was baptized by the Rev. John Morgan, Wesleyan minister. His widow, who was the daughter of Thomas Taylor, was one of the most thoughtful and devoted of Christian women. She passed away when the present writer was on the Circuit, and the last time he saw her, she said: ‘There is a certain subscription of mine due in about ten days; you will not be in Carmarthen again for a fortnight; I have my money next week; I will pay you that £5 to-day; I may be gone home before the end of the fortnight.’ Her prediction was verified, and before many days the beautiful spirit of that devoted Christian lady had been borne on angel wings into the presence of the King. This fact is mentioned as characteristic of Mrs. Thomas—she studied how to be well in advance with all her work for Christ. Thomas Wilton was another Methodist of the same high order, a pillar of strength to the work in the town. The Istance family, too; Richard, who for over sixty years was one of the most self-denying of local preachers, and John, who was for many years a most useful class-leader; other members of the family were amongst the most consistent supporters of Methodism. The Lewises and the Shanklands were stalwart Methodists. Mr. George Bagnell, who is still living and ripe with years and good works, has had a long, active, and useful life, which has been one of steady growth

—his light shining more and more unto perfect day. W. H. Davies, who is still living at Cardiff, has for many years been a faithful Methodist preacher. Carmarthen has given the Methodist ministry the Rev. James Hughes, a profound theologian and active minister. William Clark, who recently passed through the Presidential Chair of the Australian Conference, was brought up in the old Gardde Chapel, St. Clears. Hugh Price Hughes, whose praise is in all the Churches, is also a Carmarthen man. Isaac Davies and John Thomas, young men of great promise, who entered our ministry, but were cut down while still young, came from the neighbourhood of Carmarthen. St. Clears, the first Welsh chapel in the Circuit, erected in 1810, was the birthplace of many a faithful Methodist; and although not a very numerous church, it has always had some of the most substantial Christians. These included Job Brigstock, the Milet family, the Thomases and the Morrises. Special mention must here be made of David Howells, The Pant, who filled all the offices of his church with great efficiency, and for more than thirty years kept a horse almost exclusively in order that the preacher might take the three services on the Sunday at St. Clears, Llanstephan, and Carmarthen, and who by himself, son or servant, through summer heat and winter cold, walked nearly ten miles every Sunday in order to take the horse back from the Carmarthen gate to Pant, Meidrim. Llanstephan, too, had some robust Methodists. The influence of Bennett, Clark, Morris, Jones, and others is lovingly remembered by many a minister who knew that Circuit years ago. Carmarthen Circuit grew Methodist giants in those days.

Mr. Wesley's first visit to Llanelli was at the invitation of the two brothers Robert and John Deer. In 1774 he says that in consequence of the death of Sir Thomas Stepney, Wilfred Colley, the father of the Society, had been obliged to leave the neighbourhood; and John Deer, the next to him in usefulness, had gone to Abraham's bosom. He also mentions that

he preached near Sister Deer's door to a good company. The Rev. Hugh Hughes, writing to the Eurgrawn,¹ refers to the welcome given him by Widow Deer, and how the good old Christian lady became radiant as she related interesting incidents in connection with Mr. Wesley's visits, how he had placed his hand on the head of one of the children and prayed that he might become a man after God's own heart. That prayer was realized, for the son and his family became most useful and influential Methodists; the grandson, after successfully passing through all the leading hospitals of Europe, settled down in his native town, greatly beloved by a large circle of admirers, but after a short and brilliant career, to the sad disappointment of Church and family, was cut down by the reaper Death, and the medical profession was deprived of one of the most promising young men in the country. The Deer family were active and helpful in the formation of the Welsh Society at Llanelly. Mr. Child was an early supporter of Methodism in that town. The last time Mr. Wesley visited Llanelly, Mr. Henry Child intimated to him a desire to build a Methodist chapel at his own expense. The founder of Methodism looked at him smilingly, and gave him a guinea and his blessing. The chapel was erected in 1792. The Rev. James Buckley married Mr. Child's eldest daughter in 1798, and when a neighbour belonging to the Church of England remonstrated with him for allowing his daughter to marry a Methodist minister, Mr. Child calmly said that he was only surrendering to God what he had received from Him, a reply which completely upset his friend. Mr. Child's home was open to the Methodist preachers whenever they came to that town. Methodism prospered, the chapel was found too small, and on the 18th July 1828 Mrs. Buckley laid the foundation-stone of a new edifice, a ceremony her mother had performed in connection with the first. The following November the chapel was opened for

¹ Eurgrawn, 1842.

divine service, the Revs. James Buckley, William Davies (Africa), and John Bond being the preachers. The services were said to be accompanied with great spiritual power. During the years 1832–34, the Society was blessed with a wave of prosperity, and the chapel again became too small, and was again enlarged (the Rev. James Buckley laid the foundation-stone), which when opened was free of debt with the exception of £250, and that burden was allowed to remain only for a very short period.

At Llanelli the Welsh and English had only one chapel for some years. A small chapel was built at Llanon in 1814, John Deer, Edward Davies, both living at Llanelli, with Mr. Jones, currier, of Carmarthen, becoming responsible for the debt. The same year another chapel was built at Pontyberem, largely supported by friends from Carmarthen. The following year the Kidwelly Chapel was erected under the shadow of one of the finest old castles, and overlooking the most interesting Gwendraeth Valley. The ministers were truly travelling preachers in those days, preaching in cottages and wherever a congregation could be found. The Societies were small, especially as compared with other denominations. The Congregationalists and Baptists were fortunate in having able ministers at Llanelli, Pembrey, Kidwelly, Carmarthen, St. Clears, men who gathered round them a strong band of followers, which meant that influence, wealth, the force of numbers and prestige were all on their side; the training of the young was in their hands, and all the forces of public opinion were in direct and uncompromising opposition to Methodism.

The Rev. James Buckley, who had found at Llanelli a most efficient helpmate, was drawn to Wales, particularly to South Wales, where he spent many years of his active ministry. In 1832 he became supernumerary, after which, up to the time of his death in 1839, he took a deep interest in the work in Llanelli, which was now transferred from the

Swansea to the Carmarthen Circuit. In 1837 a second minister was appointed to the Carmarthen Circuit, the Rev. Henry M. Harvard being chosen. With Mr. Buckley, whose position in the Connexion, his long acquaintance with South Wales Methodism, and his great generosity, and such an able minister as Mr. Harvard labouring on the Circuit, the work prospered more satisfactorily. Mr. Boulter and Mr. C. Broom, and, in 1843, Mr. Samuel Bevan, a noble trio—worthy of those early Christians who had been made a blessing to their fellows in the days of Wesley—devoted their lives most ungrudgingly to build up Llanelli Methodism. They soon gathered round them an interesting Society; not a large church or congregation as churches were at Llanelli, but as influential in respect of character as any in the town. The Rev. David Rees, the Congregational minister of that town, had a position in the Principality such as John Angel James had in England, and in his own sphere was equally able, if not equally generous in his dealings towards Wesleyan Methodism. His long residence at Llanelli enabled him to do for Congregationalism what James did in Birmingham, and more. He seemed to have the keys of the place in his hands, and he was wise in his day, and established new Congregational churches in every new part of the town, as the result of which he saw established before his death strong churches in every corner of the town and all the villages and suburbs for miles round. He was a Calvinist, but his views were not extreme. He proved a great power in the county, an able and good man, though not a lover of Wesleyan Methodism.

The Baptists had commenced preaching at the Lower Mill as early as 1653, and in 1709 erected a chapel at Felinfoel, where a strong church was formed. The old minister, Daniel Davis, who held the pastorate with or without a co-pastor for over forty years, contributed very largely towards the establishment of that denomination in the town and vicinity. Like the Congregationalists, they carefully watched the new

population, erected commodious chapels, and attracted large congregations. There is no town in the Principality which is better provided with accommodation for religious worship, has finer chapels, larger congregations, abler preachers, or better congregational singing ; and there is no town the soil of which is less congenial to the growth of Connexionism. This fact accounts very largely for the slow growth of Wesleyan Methodism in this town.

In 1869 Llanelly became the head of a new Circuit with two ministers, the Rev. W. S. Snow being the first superintendent, the Rev. Jabez Chambers as colleague. The Hall Street Chapel has been enlarged, and recently new schools have been erected. The premises taken altogether are commodious and comfortable. From the days of Wesley to the present, Llanelly has always had a few loyal, devoted, and influential Methodist families. Mr. Broom, who only passed away recently, was an ‘ Israelite indeed,’ respected and loved by all who knew him. His was a bright, happy Methodist home. Mr. Samuel Bevan and his family have rarely been equalled in their attachment and devotion to Methodism. Mr. Bevan, who has taken an active part in educational matters in the town, was recently made Justice of the Peace. He has been for many years one of the most able representatives of Methodism in the Principality. With the present staff of rising men, Methodism in Llanelly may hope for greater progress in the future.

When the Hall Street Chapel was erected, the old chapel, which is in a fairly central position, was taken over by the Welsh, who had for many years worshipped near the docks in a smaller and less commodious chapel. It was hoped that with this change would come greater prosperity. The lack of pulpit supply has told very much against Welsh Wesleyanism. The minister has had to preach in three large and important places Sunday after Sunday for nearly half a century, and not unfrequently this one has been the only

sermon on the Sunday in an important town like Llanelli, in which might be found on any one Sunday through the year a dozen of the best preachers in the pulpits of the other denominations. We have had some faithful and devoted people in connection with the Welsh Church, but they belonged almost exclusively to the artisan population. William Jones, The Mill, Felinfoel, and his family were blessed with angelic sweetness and loveliness. David Morris was a great help to the work for many years. The fidelity of the Robertses, considering the affliction from which they suffered, an affliction the like of which we have never seen, was really astonishing. In 1885 Llanelli was made the head of a Welsh Circuit, including Pembrey and Kidwelly, the Rev. Thomas Philips being the first superintendent. Llanelli has improved under this arrangement.

For many years the English and Welsh Methodists worshipped together at Kidwelly, where there was a good Society, Sunday school, and congregation. The old chapel, erected in 1815, was considered a fine structure in those days. There were many good families connected with it. The Gravels, the Shanklands, Randells, Thomases, Harrises, and Lloyds are all names well known and highly respected in connection with the Wesleyan Church at Kidwelly. In 1865 Mr. Jacob Chivers, who had some time previously bought large tin works in the neighbourhood, and who worshipped in the Wesleyan chapel, expressed his intention of building a chapel at his own expense. Mr. Chivers's intention was that the Society should be kept together as before, and that Welsh and English services should be held alternately as in the old chapel so long as required,—an arrangement which he not only agreed to, but as he afterwards expressed himself to the writer, believed the best in the interest of the work of God in the town. On the whole, this arrangement had worked satisfactorily. True, there were a few who complained that the preachers gave too much Welsh or too much English, but

this dissatisfaction belonged chiefly to orthodox grumblers. The new chapel was built, and about to be opened for divine worship, when the question was asked as to which Circuit it should now belong to. It had always been included in the Carmarthen Welsh Circuit. It was now taken over to the English Circuit. A good deal of unpleasantness was created, families were separated, and a bitterness introduced, which left its impression upon Wesleyan Methodism in that town, and greatly retarded the progress of the work of God for many years. Mr. Chivers, who had generously presented the new chapel to the Connexion, was greatly pained, and to some extent estranged. A few of the old families held on to the old Welsh chapel and in connection with the Welsh Circuit, and struggled hard and well to keep it up; but the influential families, the young people, and nearly all the leaders and stewards, had gone to the new chapel. The course adopted was a very unwise one, and did more to estrange Welsh and English Wesleyans in the Principality than anything else. The chapel had been included in the Welsh Circuit for over forty years, Mr. Chivers and others were perfectly satisfied with the arrangements, and were desirous that they should go on as before; hence the indiscretion of those, both insiders and outsiders, who interfered.

Wesleyan Methodism has suffered loss through the reform agitations in Wales, but, with this one exception, we know of no split in an individual church which has stained our fair fame, and that in a country where, unfortunately, church divisions were very numerous for many years. There was fault on both sides, but it lay chiefly between the ministers and leaders who were responsible for the Circuit, and the Kidwelly Society in particular. Pembrey, or rather Pembre (*Pen* means 'head' or 'top,' *bre*, 'up'; hence the name signifies 'top of upland' or 'top of the hill'), was first visited by Mr. Edward Jones, Llanasa, known as Jones the Singer, who had a sweet voice, and attracted crowds to hear

him sing the gospel, about the year 1809. He preached for a time in the Red Lion, which was then occupied by a Mr. Thomas John. In 1810 it was taken on the plan by Mr. Jones, Bathafarn, as one of the regular preaching-places. Some years after services were held in a farmhouse near the Parish Church. In 1819 they were about to build a new chapel, and had fixed upon a site; but while they were considering over the matter, the Calvinistic Methodists procured the site for 999 years for thirty shillings a year; and in order to show their good feelings towards their neighbours, they had a clause inserted in the trust-deed forbidding any Wesleyan to preach in that chapel. For many years this clause was carefully guarded, but now it has been overlooked or ignored, and if still in the trust-deed it has long since ceased to exist in the hearts of the people. When Dr. Jones was a young man on the Carmarthen Circuit, living at Kidwelly, he was a fearless exposer of Calvinism; he could and did hit hard. At times he would fall upon them, as if fretting with impatience, like a tumultuous cataract. At other times he would expose their inconsistencies in most sarcastic tones, and salted them with fire. This caused the Calvinists to grow very bitter against him, and they never lost an opportunity of showing it. In later years, when on the Circuit the third time, the old bitterness had disappeared, and they were pleased to invite the Doctor to preach in the chapel. The writer, when on the Carmarthen Circuit, on more than one occasion was asked to preach in this chapel during some of their great meetings. What has become of the old clause we know not, but the writer was treated with great kindness by these good people when he preached in their chapel. The action, however, at the time greatly disheartened the Wesleyans, and in consequence the Methodist chapel was not built for more than twelve years. Mr. John Thomas, a good Methodist from Tenby, who was connected with the English Methodists at Llanelly, opened his house, and ultimately, although he did

not know the Welsh language, cast in his lot with them, and with the Rev. Hugh Hughes set to work to get a new chapel at Pembrey. This was accomplished in 1833, and the edifice was opened for divine service on the 7th May of that year. Mr. Thomas and his wife, Mrs. John and Miss John of the Red Lion, collected and contributed all the money to pay for the little chapel with the exception of £80, which they lent on interest. The little Society prospered steadily.

In the year 1845 Mr. Alexander Davis, the agent of the Earl of Ashburnham, identified himself with the Wesleyan Society at Pembrey, and for many years was a great power in the Circuit and District. His conversion was brought about in an unusual way. At one time he had been subject to deep religious impressions, but did not yield to the stirrings of the Spirit. He gradually became very hard; no matter who preached or what was said, he never felt the least impression. He had been in that state for a long time, and began to think he was given up by the Spirit. So he made up his mind that he would go to the Society and open his heart to the minister. The late Rev. Evan Richards was the preacher, and as was and is customary in Wales when any one stays back in the Society, he went to speak to Alexander Davis. The question which is most frequently put is, ‘Do you feel a desire to flee from the wrath to come?’ or ‘Do you feel a desire to give your heart to Christ?’ When Mr. Richards put the question to Alexander Davis, his reply was, ‘No; I do not feel any such desire; I have got so hardened that I do not feel anything. I am come here to see if I can feel.’ ‘You have come to the best place to realize such feelings,’ said the preacher. And before long he did feel, and he ultimately became, under the preaching of the gospel, one of the most tender-hearted men the writer has ever known. He bought a piece of land, which he presented to the trustees, upon which to build a new chapel, with a burying-ground attached to it. In 1858 a new chapel was opened, much

larger and more convenient than the old one, towards which Mr. Davis contributed and collected more than half the cost. After removing to the new chapel, they also removed the dust of their dead from the old to the new burying-ground, and then sold the lease by public auction. The cause has grown steadily at Pembrey, and is still doing well. The old leaders have gone to their reward. A. Davis, H. Williams, Mrs. Evans, Ashburnham, have passed away, but others have taken their places and are working together in the interest of the Church of Christ.

A small chapel was erected at Burry Port about 1867, which notwithstanding a large population is comparatively feeble.

At Brynaman a chapel was erected and for many years was supported by Mr. Morris, the owner of the tin works, and a near relative of Mr. Jacob Chivers of Kidwelly. He was a truly devoted Methodist. His interest in Circuit, District, and Connexional movements was deep and lasting. He was District treasurer of several of our funds. His house, which had many charms, was the happy home of all Methodist preachers. His life was beautiful in its simplicity, unpretentious, and very real. His place has largely been met by Mr. and Mrs. Callard, who take the same position in connection with the Society at Brynaman, and are the owners of the same works.

Llandilo (or the Church of Tilo) is sometimes written Teilian. Tilo was the patron saint of Llandaff, and one of the most popular in the ancient British Church. He departed this life at Llandilo-fawr in 566, and was interred at Llandaff, and to him are many churches dedicated. Llandilo is a small town situated in one of the pleasantest parts of Wales. The Vale of Towy stretches beyond Llandovery in the east, and is protected by the Sugar-loaf Mountain, the Black Mountains, and the Breconshire beacons. The peaceful Towy ever winds its way as if loth to leave such a charming home for the salt sea; the hills on each side of the valley are studded with

mansions, each surrounded by magnificent plantations, and the whole scene presents one of the most delightful landscapes in Wales. Mr. Wesley said it was 'the pleasantest he had ever seen.' It is probable that Mr. Wesley preached at Llandilo, although he does not say so. Messrs. Jones (Bathafarn) and Davies (Africa) were the first Wesleyan preachers to visit this town. In 1806 they made a tour through South Wales, reaching Llandilo on a Thursday afternoon, and preaching in a large loft of the Bears Inn. The congregation, which was a large one, was deeply affected. The next morning they preached under the market house, Mr. Jones preaching partly in English and partly in Welsh. This visit created a great sensation in the town and country for miles round, many expressing their agreement with the doctrines preached, and a desire to hear them again, and a wish to identify themselves with the new sect. Mr. Jones soon returned to Llandilo. Writing to Coke from Llandilo prior to 1808 after the Conference of 1807 held at Liverpool, Mr. Jones says that he 'found religion less real in South Wales' than he had been led to expect. 'The doctrine of the witness of the Spirit is practically ignored, which we preach with divine approval without fear or hesitation. We have many difficulties, we preach frequently, have long journeys, especially on the Sundays. We are at present at Llandilo preaching in the market-place, but we have no place to hold our Society excepting in the public-house. We have large congregations, and about sixty have joined the Society. The increase on the quarter (in the Circuit) is over a hundred, and we have one hundred and fifty on trial. In Llandovery we have signs of prosperity. I have just secured a site upon which to build a new chapel.' In 1808 Llandilo was made the head of a new Circuit, with Mr. Jones (Bathafarn,) as superintendent, David Rogers as colleague, and another. During that year chapels were erected at Llandovery, Llangadog, and Llwynyronen. At Llandilo the cause was crippled very much

because no other place than the public-house could be found in which to hold the Society meetings. Eventually Mr. W. Rees bought an old public-house in Rhosmaen Street, the property of William Jones, son-in-law of the great Rowlands of Llangeitho, for which he gave £700, and on that site a chapel and minister's house was erected in 1810, chiefly through the instrumentality of the Rev. John Davies, the superintendent of the Circuit. The chapel was considered in those days one of the best in the district. A strong Society was soon formed in connection with it, including some very substantial families: Mr. Watkin Morgan, the tanner, who afterwards removed to Swansea; Harries, the glover, a great singer; Thomas Thomas, John Thomas, Mrs. Rees, Miss Price, Thomas Kelly, bailiff, and many others.

The first missionary meeting in the Principality, says the Rev. Lot Hughes, was held at Llandilo in the month of April 1816. The Rev. Owen Davies, the Chairman of the District, presided, the Revs. Hugh Carter, Edward Jones (2nd), Hugh Hughes, John Jones, William Davies (2nd), John Davies, Morgan Griffith, and John Williams, and Messrs. Rees and Watkin Morgan all taking part. The Rev. Owen Davies preached a missionary sermon in the afternoon. Surely there was no lack of speakers, speakers too of great power, who if speaking in their own tongue would have carried an Exeter Hall audience with them.

In 1819 a remarkable work of grace, which led to the conversion of great numbers, was experienced at Llandilo. Mr. David Morgan, who afterwards became a powerful pulpit orator, was then a local preacher living at Llangadog, a few miles out of Llandilo. He was discoursing on 'of His fulness have we received, and grace for grace,' and although a very young man, he had his congregation in his hands. The feeling deepened as the preacher proceeded, and at last became so intense that a young woman who was present was so wrought upon that she cried out in the greatest agony of soul for

mercy, which came like an electric shock. The young preacher, with wonderful presence of mind and without any hesitation or delay, pointed out in the most pathetic strains the fulness of God's grace, and urged those who, like the young woman, were burdened with sin, to look to the Cross of Christ. The power was overwhelming. The cries for mercy were heard, and the voice of praise was soon heard from those who found peace. The next night the chapel was crowded long before the usual time of beginning the prayer-meeting. The Rev. Lot Hughes, who resided at Llandilo at the time, says that when he came home on the Monday from some other part of the Circuit where he had been on the previous Sunday, 'the whole town was in a state of excitement.' The work went on night after night during the whole of that winter; the meetings were well attended, and a most interesting work of grace carried on. The great misfortune on this occasion was the smallness of the chapel; many were crowded out and finally settled down in other churches, since no accommodation could be provided for them in the Wesleyan chapel. The chapel would have been enlarged but for the heavy debt which greatly crippled their work. However, in 1849, when the Rev. Evan Richards was superintendent of the Circuit, the chapel was enlarged, and this gave a new impetus to the work at Llandilo. Mr. Rees, who bought the site for the chapel, by his will gave £500, Mrs. Rees out of her own private means adding to that sum in order to free the chapel from debt. Mr. Watkin Morgan, their son-in-law, also bequeathed ten shares in the Gas Works, five each to Swansea and Llandilo Chapels, which has proved a very valuable source of income for many years. Llandilo, notwithstanding its many charms, has not grown very much; it has only a small population, but the Wesleyan Church has kept up its past traditions. The present Circuit steward, Mr. William Hopkins, with his family, are worthy of a place in the succession of devoted Methodist families in the town of Llandilo.

When Mr. Jones, Bathafarn, visited Llandilo in 1806, he went on also to Llandovery, where he and his colleagues preached with great acceptance. There was living at Rhystad, in the vicinity, a Mr. and Mrs. Robert Jones, originally from the Vale of Clwyd, but who subsequently had resided in London, and had frequently heard Mr. Wesley preach. Mr. Jones was present at Bath in 1770, on the occasion of laying a foundation-stone of a new chapel, when Mr. Wesley preached, and was so convinced of sin that he gave no rest to his eyelids until he found his Saviour. He had been living for some time at Llandovery when Mr. Jones, Bathafarn, preached in that town, and hearing that a Wesleyan preacher was coming to the town, his heart was filled with joy, his delight being greatly intensified when he found that Mr. Jones, Bathafarn, came from the beautiful Vale of Clwyd. Mr. Robert Jones at once identified himself with the Methodists, as did his wife and daughters, and up to the time of his death in 1820 lived a beautiful Christian life, which to the little Society of Wesleyans was more valuable than gold. Mr. Owen Rees, who had been connected with the Arminian Baptists, joined the Wesleyans in 1809, afterwards entering the Wesleyan ministry, and for several years proved a most acceptable and useful minister in the Welsh and afterwards in the English work. Mr. Williams, 'The Shop,' as he was familiarly called, also joined the little company of Methodists. Their class meetings were held in one of the rooms in the old Vicar Pritchard's house, of historic fame. A suitable site on leasehold was immediately secured, and a chapel erected in 1808, and a promising Society formed. Llandovery was the first place in the Principality which undertook the whole financial responsibility of holding the District meeting, which they did in 1819. The meetings were marvellous. A young man from Tregaron, by the name of John Oliver, was set apart for mission work in that meeting, and sent to Newfoundland. The preaching was accompanied with great power; as the

result, a great revival broke out, and many were added to the churches. The author of the *History of Calvinistic Methodism*, in vol. ii. p. 654, refers to the blessed results of this wonderful meeting. Mr. William Williams was for many years a good class-leader, local preacher, and exemplary Christian. The Edwards of Aberogwen, Miss Williams, daughter of Mr. Williams the maltster, were good and faithful in their day. The transference of Llandovery to the Builth Circuit hastened its death; it was transferred back to the Llandilo Circuit greatly enfeebled, and with only one minister on that Circuit the few friends lost heart and the old chapel was sold.

When Mr. Jones, Bathafarn, preached at Llandilo in 1806, he was invited by Mr. Henry Jones of Cilmanllwyd, a respectable farmer living near the ruins of the old Cenen Castle, in the neighbourhood of which is the 'Eye of Louger,' probably the strongest spring in the Principality, and which, rushing out from the base or near the base of the Black Mountain, speedily becomes a most powerful stream known as the Louger River. Mr. Jones accepted the invitation, when the farmer and his wife, with several others, decided to identify themselves with the Wesleyans. When Mr. Jones, Bathafarn, was appointed to Llandilo in 1808, Cilmanllwyd was taken on the plan. The Society was then steadily increasing. William Thomas, The Castle; David Griffith, Lower House; Mrs. Jones, Llwyn; William Morris, Thomas Walters, the Davies, and others joined the Wesleyans. The farmhouse became too small, and a site was secured from Mr. Maxwell, on leasehold for two hundred years, and a new chapel erected, which was opened for divine worship, December 20, 1808, the debt on it after the opening service amounting to only £80. In 1849, when the Rev. Evan Richards (who was most active in connection with chapel building) was superintendent of the Llandilo Circuit, the Llwyn-yr Onen (The Ashgrove) Chapel was enlarged and a gallery erected, the Rev. William Naylor, Dr. Jones, Rowland Hughes, William

Rowlands, and others taking part in the opening services. The old families are still represented by their children or grandchildren, and the neighbourhood is held by Wesleyan Methodists. The present Circuit steward is Mr. Rees Davies, the agent of Lord Denevor, and a faithful Methodist. Two of his daughters married Wesleyan ministers; and of the sons, one is a Circuit steward of the Swansea Circuit, and another a most useful local preacher in the Pontypool Circuit. The Society, congregation, and Sunday school are as prosperous as at any time in the past.

Llangadog was another village visited by Mr. Jones, Bathafarn, in 1806. He and his colleagues preached at the Castle Inn, and, as was his custom, he would invariably either after or during the sermon explain the peculiar Methodist doctrines, and give his reasons for accepting them. On this occasion he adopted that course, after which a Mr. Thomas Morgan, Penbont near Llangadog, stood up and said, 'These are the doctrines the world needs. I have been waiting for them for thirty years, but I never heard them preached till to-day.' Then he invited the preacher to his home, and told him to make his house the Wesleyan preachers' home whenever they came to that neighbourhood. Thomas Morgan's son, David, was one of the first to become a member of the Wesleyan Society. In the year 1811 that son began to preach, and in 1822 entered the ministry and travelled in many of the best Circuits, with more than ordinary acceptance and success. In his own county he was greatly honoured, crowds followed him, and many of those services were similar to the one at Llandilo to which we have referred in this chapter. Mr. Griffith Griffiths, who had taken interest in young David Morgan previous to the visit of Jones, Bathafarn, joined the Wesleyans, and became a most useful and influential member of the Society.

In 1808, when the Rev. E. Jones, Bathafarn, was the superintendent of the Circuit, a small chapel was erected

and a very promising Society formed. David Morgan kept a day-school in the village, and became very popular with the parents; and notwithstanding great opposition, Methodism took root in the village. Several families joined the Society, some of them becoming influential Methodists in Merthyr Tydfil, Bristol, Swansea, and elsewhere. We met with one representative of the Evans family recently in America, and he referred with great affection to his parents' connection with the Wesleyan chapel at Llangadog.

When Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) and William Davies (Africa) visited Llandilo in 1806, they met Mr. David Morgan of Llangwyddfan, who had been in great distress of mind. Calvinism was the orthodox doctrine, which few hesitated to accept. Mr. Morgan had never had the effective call, and he had given up hope of ever being saved. He was in the town on business when the singing of the Wesleyan preachers attracted his attention. He drew near to them, and the preaching of a free, full, and present salvation was a revelation to his soul, which brought with it unspeakable joy. He pressed up to the preachers and invited them to Llandybie. The preachers accepted the invitation, and took their stand on a horseblock near the Angel Inn. At the close of the service they were invited to the Red Cow by a Mr. David Thomas, who was then the landlord. Mr. David Morgan and David Thomas were the first to join the Society, and its meetings were held at the Red Cow up to the time the chapel was erected in 1809. There being no other place of worship at the time in the village excepting the Parish Church, which was badly attended, Wesleyan Methodism had a better reception at Llandybie than in most places. William Llewelyn, William Owen, Rees Griffiths, Thomas Davies and his family, Mary Morris, and Mrs. David Morgan, all became zealous members of the Society.

When the Rev. Edward Jones returned to the Circuit he found a hearty welcome awaiting him at Llandybie. The

doctrines of Wesleyan Methodism were highly commended in the neighbourhood. There were others like Mr. David Morgan in the despair of hopeless darkness, and with the Methodist preachers there came to them 'a great light.' The chapel, which was built under Bathafarn's guidance, was small and not exceptionally attractive, but it became the spiritual birthplace of many good people. In 1851, under the superintendency of the Rev. Ebenezer Morgan, it was renovated and greatly improved. During the superintendency of the Rev. Peter Jones of the Circuit, 1881–83, a commodious, attractive, and a much larger new chapel was erected, greatly to the credit of the Llandybie Society. The return to his native place of Mr. Thomas Howells has been a great help to the friends on the spot in paying off the debt from which, with the exception of the loan, that chapel is now free. The Rev. Griffith Jones, Vicar of Mostyn, one of the most popular of Welsh preachers in the Church, and the Rev. Henry Elwyn Thomas, who is an able and popular Congregational preacher in London, were brought up and began to preach in this church, their relatives being counted amongst its best workers.

Welsh Wesleyanism had a good beginning in this county. The first visit of the Rev. Edward Jones and Davies (Africa) was pre-eminently a successful one. In every place the hand of Providence prepared the way for them, and they were abundantly blessed in their work. And when Mr. Jones returned to the Circuit two years later, the work was equally satisfactory. During the three years, six new chapels were erected, and were soon crowded with zealous and devout people. The membership at the end of 1809 had reached 381. For many years both the Carmarthen and Llandilo Circuits were steadily growing. There were a number of well-to-do, intelligent, generous, and influential families connected with each place. In several of the larger places, Wesleyan Methodism was not numerically equal to the older Nonconformist bodies, but in its respectability and spiritual

power it was second to none. In some of the places it was by far the most influential. The Methodists of to-day have less opposition to contend with, and are perhaps less robust and vigorous. In the early days an important stimulus was denominational zeal, and this has given way to broader views and Christian liberality of sentiment. Arminian doctrines were, in the beginning, a most important factor, which attracted attention, stimulated thought, and inspired confidence. Arminian doctrines are preached to-day in every pulpit, and men in despair caused by the fear of reprobation are never found. English Wesleyanism has a great responsibility resting upon it. If the cause be not taken in hand speedily and with vigour, a great opportunity for good will be lost; but if the tide be taken at the flood, it must result in the extension of Methodism.

The early Methodist preachers were specially blessed in their work in the county of Carmarthen. They were successful in leading to Christ and to Methodism a goodly company of intelligent and influential families, but scarcely have their descendants been able to maintain a similar position.

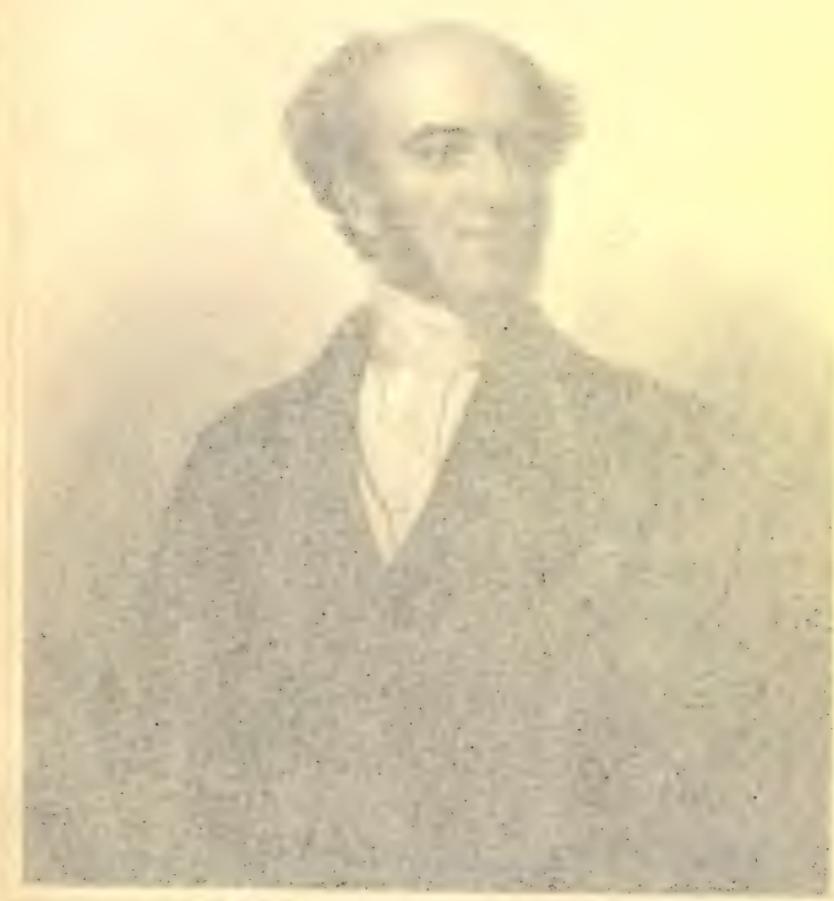
The future will be more than ever in the hands of the English section of the Wesleyan Church, and we hope that by hearty work and Christian piety they will show themselves equal to their privileges and responsibilities.

CHAPTER XIV.

PEMBROKESHIRE.

Pembroke—Thomas Taylor—Mr. Wesley at Pembroke—Tenby—Haverfordwest—The widespread Antinomianism—Mr. Wesley at Dale—New Chapel at Haverfordwest—At Llwyngwair—Newport—Jefferson—Bowen, Llwyngwair—Admiral Vaughan—Tracoon—Special Prayer-meeting at Haverfordwest—At St. David's—The Cathedral—Roach—Miss Bishop—Disappointed in his Assistant—Thomas Roberts—His Usefulness—Richard Whatecoat and Pilmoor in the County—Societies formed—Pembroke—The Dock—Carew—Jefferson—Cresselly—Warren—Jameson—Redberth—Pennar—Nayland—Tenby—Milford—Dale—Roach—Spittal—Jones, Bathafarn, at Haverfordwest—Welsh Methodism—St. David's Persecutions—Discussions—Solva—Letterston—Dr. Jones—Eminent Ministers—Local Preachers.

THE county of Pembroke is the most westerly in Wales. 'Some old Welsh scholars,' says the Rev. Thomas Morgan, 'thought that the original form of the name was Penbrog or Penbrogh; others, the Latinised form *Pembrochia*, whence probably the English *Pembroke*.' The roots are *pen*, head, end, and *bro*, a country, or an extensive tract of land signifying a headland, which is a very proper appellation, since it forms the west end or headland of the Principality. The name *Dyved* was once applied to the whole county from which the Roman *Dimeta* was derived, but in the time of Giraldus Cambrensis, the small peninsula of Castlemartin, lying between Milford Haven on the north and the Bristol Channel on the south, constituted the province of Pembroke. The name was also extended to the town and fortress built there by Ainulph-de-Montgomery, in the reign of Henry I., and ultimately it was given to the whole county. The first



(1) Name at Gloucester—Talby—Haverhill—
Wellesley—Mr. Wesley at Dale—
Weston—Weston—Newport—Jefferson
Woodstock—Cochran—Tracoon—Special
Woodstock—David's—The Cathedral—
Woodstock—Woodstock—Thomas Roberts
Woodstock—Woodstock—Pawtuxet in the County—
Woodstock—Herk—Cates—Jefferson—
Woodstock—Pratt—Nayland—Talby
Woodstock—Woodstock, at Haverhill—
Woodstock—Woodstock—Woodstock—
Woodstock—Woodstock—Woodstock—
Woodstock—Woodstock—Woodstock—

The name of Pembrokeshire is the most westerly in Wales, and is derived from the town of Pembroke, says the Rev. Thomas Morgan, from the Latin form *Pembrochia*, whence probably the English *Pembroke*. The roots are *penn*, head, and *brych*, a wood, or a certain tract of land signifying a headland. It is a very proper appellation, since it denotes the extreme headland of the Principality. The name was first given to the whole county from the town of Pembroke, which was derived, but in the time of Cadwallader, from the small peninsula of Castlemartin, from hence called *Bryn Gwyn* on the north and the Bristol Channel on the south, and included the province of Pembrokeshire. The name was soon extended to the town and fortress built there by Dugdale-Montgomery, in the reign of Henry I., and subsequently it was given to the whole county. The in-



John C. Calhoun

John C. Calhoun

Wesleyan preacher to visit the county of Pembroke was the Rev. Thomas Taylor, a native of Yorkshire, who was one of Mr. Wesley's first lay preachers, and who was elected President of the Conference in 1797 and 1809. After he had been residing for a time at Gower, in Glamorganshire, he found his way to Pembrokeshire. He reached Pembroke, where, he says, 'I had a multitude to hear me, who behaved in a most respectable manner, and generously undertook to pay all my travelling and other expenses.' Such an offer made to one who had suffered so much privation was thankfully received. In addition, it was a new incentive to self-sacrifice, endurance, and manly toil in the Master's vineyard, and Mr. Taylor continued working in the neighbourhood with considerable acceptance. 'At the next Conference,' he writes, 'I went to Tenby, which had held out stoutly for their Master, and boasted that no preacher had ever come there, neither should they, but at the price of their lives. I was determined to make the attempt, so a few friends accompanied me from Pembroke on Sunday morning, and we arrived about eight o'clock and put up our horses, went to the Cross, and gave out the Hundredth Psalm. The people flocked together and behaved well. After prayer without any interruption, the Mayor walked up the street, and strove to induce some of the people to pull down the preacher. He then read the Riot Act, influenced the people to bring the preacher before the magistrates, and then dismissed him with an order that he was not to preach again, to which he replied that he would preach again at two o'clock; which,' he says, 'I did to well-nigh all the town.' A fortnight later he went to Tenby, and preached to large congregations. It was a great misfortune that Mr. Taylor was obliged to leave for Ireland. Mr. Wesley had not yet visited this county. Two years later, however, under date August 21, 1763, he writes: 'I visited Tenby; it rained almost all the morning; however, we reached Tenby about eleven o'clock. The rain then ceased,

and I preached at the Cross to a congregation gathered from many miles round. The sun broke out several times and shone hot in my face, but never for more than two minutes together.' No reference is made to the service, which would suggest that nothing special occurred to attract Mr. Wesley's attention. He rode to Pembroke in company with two gentlemen who had gone to Carmarthen to meet him, which place he reached in time to preach at about five that afternoon to a much larger congregation than the one at Tenby. There were a few gay people present, who at the beginning of the service ill-behaved themselves, but under the heart-searching and effective preaching of the great evangelist, they lost their gaiety, and were as serious as their neighbours, and a powerful impression was made upon them. On the Monday and Tuesday Mr. Wesley preached in several places with regard to which no particulars are given—the adjoining villages were undoubtedly visited. On Wednesday the 24th he rode to Haverfordwest, and notwithstanding that it was the Assize week, the congregation was the largest since he had left London, deeply attentive, and a profound impression was made. Mr. Wesley remained here over the Thursday, leaving on the Friday morning on his return journey. While at Haverfordwest he writes: 'I am more convinced than ever that the preaching like an apostle, without joining together those that are awakened, and training them up in the ways of God, is only begetting children for the murderer. How much preaching has there been for these twenty years all over Pembrokeshire! But no regular Societies, no discipline, no Order or Connexion; and the consequence is, that nine in ten of the once awakened are now faster asleep than ever.' As Mr. Tyerman says: 'These are weighty words, and well worth pondering by those in modern days who advocate a revision of the laws respecting Methodists meeting together in weekly class.'

The following year Mr. Wesley again visited the county of

Pembroke. On Friday, July 27, 1764, he reached Pembroke before he was expected, and being rather exhausted, rested there the night. The minister of St. Mary was willing for Mr. Wesley to preach in the church, but the Mayor, Mr. Richard Bowling, a comparatively young man, who thought more of his position as chief magistrate than of the morality and happiness of the people of the town, sent to the clergyman to forbid Mr. Wesley doing so. Mr. Wesley heard the vicar preach a very useful sermon. The Mayor's behaviour so disgusted even the gentry that they resolved to hear what they could, and accordingly flocked together from all parts of the town; Mr. Wesley remarking that 'perhaps this taking up the cross may profit them more than my sermon in the church would have done.' On the Monday Mr. Wesley rode to Haverfordwest, but unfortunately no notice had been given of his coming. He, however, walked up towards the castle and began singing a hymn, which soon attracted a great many to hear him preach. The lack of workers in this town was to him a great trouble. 'Were zealous and active workers here,' he writes under that date, 'what a harvest might there be!' He returned to Pembroke through heavy rain. It was on the same day he wrote a preface to *The Christian's Pocket Companion*, consisting of select texts of the New Testament, with suitable observations in prose and verse, by John Barnes, Carmarthen, and which was published in Welsh the following year.

After an interval of three years he again visited Pembroke-shire on Tuesday, September 1, 1767, and on that and the following evenings he preached in the main street to far more than the house could have contained. In the mornings the services were conducted in the room at the back of the York Tavern, where they held their Society meetings. On the following day, finding that the work was not progressing satisfactorily, he carefully inquired into the causes, one of the chief being the prejudice and misrepresentations of Mr.

Davies's preachers. The Rev. Howell Davies, who was a disciple of Griffith Jones, Llanddowror, notwithstanding his Methodistic work, retained his livings up to the time of his death, which undoubtedly was a great help to him in his arduous work. Like other leading preachers in the vernacular, he was a high Calvinist, and many of his followers and early preachers were comparatively illiterate, contracted in their views; and they privately and publicly denounced the Wesleyan preachers. Wesley's preachers were young Englishmen, ignorant of the language of the people amongst whom they laboured, and were probably more irritable than they would otherwise have been. Certain it is when they found their converts being led astray, frightened, and continually inveighed against, they were provoked to retort, which to use Mr. Wesley's words, 'always makes a bad matter worse.'

The one great end of the founder of Methodism is very clearly and forcibly demonstrated in the advice which he gave his followers on this occasion:—‘(1) Let all the people sacredly abstain from back-biting, tale-bearing, evil-speaking; (2) let all our preachers abstain from railing, either in public or private, as well as from disputing; (3) let them never preach controversy, but plain, practical, and experimental religion.’ The preachers who had been working the Circuit which covered the whole of South Wales during the previous two years, were Martin Rodda, George Story, and Thomas Newall. And the three new preachers just then appointed were George Hudson, Joseph Pilmoor, and William Harry. Joseph Pilmoor, who continued a second year, and with Richard Boardman went out from Wales to America, makes mention in his diary, which is still in the Baltimore Library, of the difficulties with which they had to contend in consequence of the Antinomian doctrines that prevailed in the county of Pembroke.

Mr. Wesley preached at Lamphy the following morning, and in the evening at Pembroke. On Saturday, September

15, 1767, he rode to Haverfordwest, but was in a difficulty to preach in consequence of incessant rain. None of the churches were open to him. Constrained by the people, he took his stand near the castle, where he had preached on the previous visit, and the whole congregation stood as quietly as if they had been in a cathedral. On the Sunday morning he preached in the little church of St. Daniel's, which until very lately was in ruins. It was filled during prayers and sermon, and a considerable number gladly partook of the Lord's Supper. Returning to Haverfordwest, he preached in the evening, notwithstanding the heavy rain, near the castle, on 'O that thou hadst known, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace !'

Mr. Wesley's fourth visit to this county was in August 1768. He reached Haverfordwest on Wednesday morning, the 3rd, remaining till Saturday, and crowds flocked to hear him preach. He was greatly pleased with the good people of this town. 'Indeed,' he says, 'a more quiet, humane, courteous people I have scarce ever seen.' Mr. Wesley discovered that they had been privileged with a great deal of preaching, so much that he was afraid they were 'surfeited' before he set foot in the town. He had always considered Pembroke his most important centre in this county till this visit, when he was favourably impressed with Haverfordwest. When he went to Pembroke on the Saturday, he wrote in his journal, 'We were here several times before we had any place in Haverfordwest, but we have reason to fear lest the first become last.' On the same day he wrote a memorable letter respecting the suggested giving up of the Spitalfield Chapel, to which he declined to consent. On the Sunday he preached again at St. Daniel's, where he also administered the Sacrament, and endeavoured to 'compose some misunderstandings which had obstructed the work of God.'

On August 12, 1769, Mr. Wesley preached at Haverfordwest. The next day being Sunday, he preached at St. Daniel's, Pembroke, taking as his text, 'What God hath

cleansed, that call not thou common.' He writes of this day, 'The bigots of all sides seemed ashamed before God, and I trust will not soon forget this day.' He preached again in the afternoon in the same place, meeting with the Society in the evening, and succeeding in persuading them 'once more to lay their little jars to sleep.' On the Monday following, in the Town Hall, he preached to nearly all the gentry in Pembroke, and the service was one of exceptional power. The Tuesday was spent in visiting Haverfordwest, and, notwithstanding the inclement weather, he was obliged to preach in the open air in consequence of the largeness of the congregation. The following day was also given to Haverfordwest, when he met the Society, which was then the most lively one in Wales. Many were rejoicing in the love of God, and many groaning for full redemption.

During this day he gave a second reading to that lively book, Mr. Newton's *Account of his own Experience*, which contains some extraordinary passages, but may be accounted for without one jot of Predestinarianism. Mr. Wesley said that Mr. Newton as well as Colonel Gardiner's conversion was answer to his mother's prayers.

Mr. Wesley's next visit was in August 1771. He reached Haverfordwest on the 20th, preaching to a large and attentive congregation in St. Martin's churchyard. The next evening, probably in the same place, he applied the story of Dives and Lazarus, and many were 'almost persuaded' to be Christians. The next day he rode to Dale, a little village at the mouth of Milford Haven. Considerable attention had been given to Dale and Marloes, but 'the people,' wrote Mr. Wesley, 'seemed as dead as stones—perfectly quiet and perfectly unconcerned.' The preacher told them what he thought about them, and it went as a sword to their hearts; they wept bitterly, and 'I know not,' he writes, 'where we have found more of the presence of God.' The next day he preached at Houghton, and in the evening at the Town Hall, Pembroke. The

Sunday morning he preached at St. Daniel's; in the afternoon at Monkton, a large, old, ruinous building, which had the largest congregation it had witnessed during the century. Many of the people being 'gay and genteel,' Mr. Wesley felt it difficult to be 'shallow enough' for such a 'polite audience.' The year was one of considerable perplexity—more especially because of the Calvinistic controversy which at this time attracted much public attention in England and Wales. Mr. Wesley had just come from the Bristol Conference, where Mr. Shirley's letter had been under discussion, resulting in an open conflict. Rowlands and Harris, too, in Wales failed to see eye to eye, and for many years afterwards they remained estranged from each other. The founder of Methodism, however, had come into Wales not to discuss controversial subjects, but to preach Christ and Him crucified.

On Tuesday, August 18, 1772, Mr. Wesley came to Haverfordwest, and preached at the opening of the new chapel in that town, which he says was by far 'the neatest in Wales.' The following day was one of great grace. The Society had grown in number and power, and was enjoying 'showers of blessing.' 'After preaching on Wednesday, we had such a meeting as I have seldom known,' writes Mr. Wesley. 'Almost every one spoke as well as they could for tears, and with the utmost simplicity; and many of them appeared to know the great salvation, to love God with all their heart.' This was undoubtedly a Society meeting similar to those which have been frequently held in Wales,—a blending together of fellowship-meeting and love-feast, without the elements. Such meetings are frequently held after the public service, and the sermon is touched upon, especially those portions of it which made a deep impression on the minds of certain individuals. The next day Mr. Wesley rode to Llwyngwair, a gentleman's seat near Newport, in the north of Pembrokeshire. Here he found an old friend in the

person of the vicar—Mr. Pugh. Mr. Wesley preached here that day, and again the next morning, and then returned to Haverfordwest. He went on to Pembroke Ferry, and, while waiting for the boat, sat down on a convenient stone and finished writing a little tract which he had in hand, reaching Pembroke in time to preach in the Town Hall to a good company, where he had ‘a solemn and comfortable opportunity.’ On the Sunday, in consequence of violent rain, the congregation at St. Daniel’s was not so large as it would otherwise have been, and he experienced difficulty in going over the ferry to Haverfordwest in time for the evening service. He spent a good part of Monday at Haverfordwest, proceeding that evening to Llanelly.

The county of Pembroke was again visited on Friday, August 19, 1774, the following Saturday and Sunday morning being given to the county town and neighbourhood. At St. Daniel’s it was ‘a good time’; after which Mr. Wesley went to Haverfordwest for the evening service, expecting to preach in the open air, but could not because of the rain. He had not visited this Circuit for two years, and notwithstanding that there were two ministers on the ground, he found that ‘discipline had been totally neglected,’ and that the Society, which during his previous visit was so lively and promising, was now ‘cold, languid, dead.’ This is more to be wondered at considering that Richard Whatcoat, who was shortly afterwards sent out to take up such a prominent part in the American Church, was the superintendent of the Circuit. The Monday was given to this Society to ‘awaken them,’ and Mr. Wesley left them full of good resolution.

He again visited the county about August 21, 1775, and remained therein for three or four days, preaching at Pembroke, Haverfordwest, and other places; but with regard to which nothing special attracted his attention. Two years later he visited the county, reaching Llwyngwair on Monday, July

14, 1777, was met by his old friend Mr. Pugh, and received with kindness by the Squire of North Pembroke. On this occasion he read prayers and preached in the Newport Church. Mr. Wesley, walking along the Newport Bay, says: ‘I observed on the ground a large quantity of turfs. These are formed by removing the sand above the high-water mark, under which there is a continued bed of turf, with the roots of trees, leaves, nuts, and various kinds of vegetables. So that it is plain the sea is an intruder here, and now covers what was once dry land. Such probably was the whole bay a few centuries ago. It is not improbable that formerly it was dry land from Aberystwyth to St. David’s Point.’ Early tradition more than confirms this view. The story of ‘*Cantré r gwaelod*’ (The Hundred Cities Swamped) points out that the whole of Cardigan Bay, from St. David’s Point to Bardsey Island beyond the Carnarvon Peninsula, was dry land, upon which there were a hundred cities, all of which were inundated by the sea, and never reclaimed. The next day (July 15, 1777) was given to Cardigan. The following day Mr. Wesley again preached at Newport, which he said was the first town he had seen in Wales that showed any signs of increase. He dined with Admiral Vaughan at Tracoon, one of the most delightful spots that can be imagined. Returning to Haverfordwest tired, he felt faint for a time, but when he saw the congregation it was all gone, and after preaching and meeting the Society, he was as fresh as at six o’clock in the morning. On Thursday, 17th, he visited Roach, and took a view of the old castle built on a steep rock. The next day was given to Haverfordwest. ‘The more converse’ he had with this people, ‘the more he became united to them.’ On Saturday he preached at Houghton, about two miles from the ferry, where he and the simple people had an ‘uncommon blessing.’ At Pembroke Mr. Wesley had a most ‘elegant congregation’; some of them came in laughing and dancing as into a theatre,

but in a few minutes the preacher's impressive words on 'death' changed their mood, and they became very serious. The services on Sunday at St. Daniel's were very rich in spiritual blessings. On the Monday he yielded to considerable pressure, and preached at Jatterson (rather Jefferson), a colliery district about seven miles from Pembroke. Here the house was crowded, and a gentleman violently pressing in bade the people 'get home and mind their own business.' Mr. Wesley adds, 'As he used bad words, my driver spake to him. The gentleman replied fiercely, "Do you think I need to be taught by a chaise-boy ?" "Really, sir, I think you do," said the lad, and that ended the conversation.'

Two years later, Mr. Wesley again visited the county of Pembroke. On August 17, 1779, he came to Llwyngwair. The next day he preached at Newport Parish Church, returning to Haverfordwest for the evening, where he had a different congregation both as to number and spirit—the Society being active, united, striving together for the hope of the gospel. The next morning Mr. Wesley went to Tracoona, the mansion of Admiral Vaughan, who had met Mr. Wesley on his previous visit at Llwyngwair. The house stands in a deep valley, surrounded with tall trees and then with lofty mountains; 'one of the loveliest places in Great Britain,' said Mr. Wesley. Although he never had a Society in this place, the admiral was greatly attached to Wesley, and his sisters became faithful members of Society. Recently one of the descendants of the old family has erected and endowed a really magnificent educational establishment in this place, which is subject to and under the direction of the Wesleyan Education Committee. The afternoon of the same day (August 17, 1779) the great evangelist preached in the Parish Church of Little Newcastle on the way from Tracoona to Haverfordwest, where he preached in the evening. On Friday the 20th, a special prayer-meeting was held to make

intercession for the king and country, which was in a state of agitation caused by the threats of the enemy, and a feeling of dissatisfaction throughout the land. The Apostle of Methodism was a most loyal subject, which he desired to express. The enemy was almost at the gate, and Mr. Wesley, writing to Bradburn, said: ‘Humanly speaking, we are not able to contend with them either by sea or land. They are watching over us like a leopard for his prey, just ready to spring upon us. The Lord that dwelleth on high is mightier.’ In the evening of the same day the chapel was very full, people of all denominations being present. All felt that God was present. On the Saturday Mr. Wesley went on to Pembroke, and finding that there were many American prisoners in the town, he took his stand against the place where they were confined, so that they could hear distinctly, and many of them were much affected. The Sunday morning he preached at St. Daniel’s, returning in the evening to Haverfordwest, where many of the gentry came to hear him preach.

Mr. Wesley had frequently visited the Principality immediately after the Conference, but in 1781, baffled in his purpose to visit Ireland, he came in the spring, reaching Pembroke on Thursday, April 26. He preached that day in the Town Hall, to the ‘honest colliers’ at Jefferson on the next day, returning to preach in Pembroke for the evening, and he remained in the town on the Saturday. The Society here had been reduced to a fourth of its former dimensions, but Mr. Wesley found comfort in the fact that they were then ‘at peace,’ were ‘all alive,’ and were desirous ‘to be altogether Christians.’ The Sunday morning he preached at St. Daniel’s, and in the evening at Haverfordwest, where there was a good Society and a most lively and attentive congregation. On the Monday he met a company of fifty children, who were taken charge of by Miss Warren, who loved them, took so much pains with them, their behaviour was so

composed that they were a pattern to the whole congregation. On May-day he rode to the city of St. David's, a distance of sixteen miles, with its sixteen hills, but a fruitful and well-cultivated land. Mr. Wesley was impressed with the contrast as compared with the westerly parts of Cornwall. 'The west of Cornwall so barren and wild, and that of Wales so fruitful and well improved.' The city of St. David's 'itself is a melancholy spectacle,' said he; 'I saw but one tolerable good house in it.' The cathedral has been a large and stately fabric, far superior to any other in Wales. But a great part of it has fallen down already, and the rest is hastening into ruin,—one blessed fruit (among many) of bishops residing at a distance from their See. Here are the tombs and effigies of many ancient worthies: Owen Tudor in particular. Mr. Wesley preached at St. David's, taking his stand on the old cross. The next day he preached at Spittal on his way to Tracoon, where he spent the night in lonely retirement, buried from all the world in the depth of the woods and mountains. The next day he preached twice in the Newport Church, returning on Saturday to Haverfordwest, to which place he gave the second Sunday during this visit, preaching in St. Thomas's Church on 'Christ crucified,' which was a stumbling-block to some of his hearers. The next day he preached to a large and most attentive company at Narbeth, a small town ten miles from Haverfordwest.

Tenby had been visited by Mr. Wesley during his first journey through the county, but not again for more than twenty years. On August 14, 1784, that attractive watering-place was visited again. The preacher was impressed with the appearance of the town, 'two-thirds of which,' he says, 'was either in ruins or had vanished away.' The congregation was large and attentive that evening, as it was also the next morning, when the preacher took his stand on the street, and was led to believe that salvation at length had come to this

place also. He went on in the evening to Pembroke, preaching in St. Daniel's, where many mourned after God, and many rejoiced with joy unspeakable.

Monday, the 16th, he rode and preached at Haverfordwest ; the next day to Roach to preach at the 'new chapel, which was pretty well filled.' On the Wednesday he went to Tracoon, and preached there in the evening to Admiral Vaughan's family and friends. The next day we find him at Mr. Bowen's, Llwyngwair, where he met Mr. Bowen's brothers and two of his sons, who had just returned from the university. On the Friday he preached in the Newport Church, returning in the evening to Haverfordwest. The Bowens of Llwyngwair are highly respected in the county. One member of the family was a few years since the member of Parliament for Pembrokeshire ; another was one of her Majesty's judges. The family has always felt proud of its former connection with the founder of Wesleyan Methodism. On Mr. Wesley's return to Haverfordwest the Bishop of St. David's was that day holding his visitation in that town, and they unexpectedly met in the street ; the church dignitary very graciously bowed to the Apostle of Methodism, his salute being courteously responded to by Mr. Wesley—an incident which though trifling in itself was thought a great deal of by the people of Haverfordwest, and certainly contributed towards the popularity of the bishop. During this visit Mr. Wesley wrote a remarkable letter to Miss Bishop, the mistress of a boarding school, in answer to two questions, one bearing upon dancing, the other on novel reading. The letter is dated Haverfordwest, August 18, 1784 :—

'MY DEAR SISTER,—It seems God Himself has already decided the question concerning dancing. He has shown His approbation of your conduct by sending these children to you again. If dancing be not evil itself, yet it leads young

women to numberless evils, and the hazard of these, on the one side, seems far to overbalance the little inconveniences on the other. Therefore, thus much may certainly be said, you have chosen the more excellent way. I would recommend very few novels to young persons for fear they should be desirous of more. Mr. Brooke wrote one more, beside *The Earl of Moreland*, *The History of the Human Heart*. I think it is well worth reading, though it is not equal to his former productions. The want of novels may be more than supplied by well-chosen history; such as the *Concise History of England*, the *Concise History of the Church*, Rollin's *Ancient History*, Hooke's *Roman History* (the only impartial one extant), and a few more. For the elder and more sensible children, Malebranche's *Search after Truth* is an excellent French book. Perhaps you may add Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*, with the remarks upon it in the *Arminian Magazine*. I had forgotten that beautiful book, *The Travels of Cyrus*, whether in French or English.—I always am your affectionate friend and brother,

JOHN WESLEY.'

This letter is one out of a large number written to Miss Bishop, with whom Mr. Wesley frequently exchanged views respecting a great many books. We have quoted the above portion of the letter more especially in order that his wise words on the dangers indicated may have an opportunity of reaching some young people who may have a tendency to yield to temptation in that direction.

Mr. Wesley was now becoming an old man, the Connexion was steadily progressing, and the demands upon his time and attention were greatly increasing. Consequently, he was not able to visit Wales again before 1788. On Tuesday, August 19, after preaching at Carmarthen in the morning, he proceeded to Llwyngwair (which means Haygrove), preaching that evening in the Parish Church, Newport, with greater prospect of doing good than on any of his previous visits to this place. The next day he went to Tracoon, which, he says again, was

one of the most venerable seats in Great Britain. Here he was welcomed by the good old admiral and his four maiden sisters, the youngest of whom had seen her seventy summers. He wrote a remarkable letter to Miss Ritchie while at Tracoon, and preached to a well-filled congregation in the chapel at Haverfordwest the same evening. The long absence of Mr. Wesley left its effects upon the congregation and Society in this town. The classes, bands, and discipline had, generally speaking, been totally neglected, and Mr. Wesley found that he had to begin at the foundation again, and settle everything. He gave directions to preachers, leaders, and people. He felt confident that the preachers then appointed would 'neglect nothing.' On Friday, 22nd, he went on to Pembroke, and found that there, too, 'everything had been neglected; no stewards, bands, half the preaching-places given up; and the people cold, heartless, dead.' Two days were given to the work here; the Society was again filled with hope and new life. Sunday morning he preached at St. Daniel's to a 'lovely congregation,' and they were 'remarkably blessed.' He returned in the evening of the Sunday to Haverfordwest, when he preached in a large open space near the St. Mary Church to the 'largest congregation he had seen in Wales for many a year.'

Mr. Wesley set out for Wales as soon as the Bristol Conference of 1790 was ended, and spent three weeks in the Principality, this proving his last visit. When he came to Pembrokeshire there was the same trouble awaiting him as on the former occasion. The superintendent minister had neglected his duty, and the Circuit was in a very unsatisfactory state. Writing to the Rev. Thomas Roberts, a young preacher of four years' standing, whom he had just appointed to the Bristol Circuit, he says:—

HAVERFORDWEST, August 13, 1790.

'DEAR TOMMY,—Now I shall make a trial of you, whether I can confide in you or no. Since I came hither, I have been

much concerned. This is the most important Circuit in all Wales; but it has been vilely neglected by the assistant, whom, therefore, I can trust no more. I can trust you, even in so critical a case. I desire, therefore, that whoever opposes, you will set out immediately, and come hither as soon as ever you can. I wish you could meet me at Cardiff or Cowbridge. You will see by the printed plan when I shall be at either of those places. If you have not notice enough to do this, meet me to-morrow se'nnight at the New Passage, unless you can get a passage by the weekly boat to Swansea. If it be possible do not fail. It may be this is the beginning of a lasting friendship between you and, dear Tommy, yours, etc.,

JOHN WESLEY.'

From Pembroke, on the 16th of the same month, Mr. Wesley wrote to Mr. William Mears of Rochester, but beyond these letters he has left us no information respecting this visit. Mr. Wesley was now within six months of laying down his armour, giving up the trust which had been committed to his charge, and entering into his Master's joy. It was twenty-eight years since he had first visited Pembrokeshire; he had been here fourteen times, had won the hearts of many of the most influential families in the county, formed Societies, erected places of worship, and carried with him to the homes of the people and to the Societies the sunshine of a happy soul—had, moreover, borne great opposition and misrepresentation with the fortitude of a true apostle.

During the twenty-eight years over which Mr. Wesley's visits and services extended, one painful fact is ever coming to the surface in connection with the work in this county, and to some extent throughout the whole of the Principality, the fluctuations in the Societies almost every time he came into the Circuit. Mr. Wesley's own personality would attract large gatherings, and would draw Church people and Non-conformists to hear him, which his preachers could not do. There is no doubt that Mr. Wesley's visits were very real

work ; he was never in haste, yet his stay in a given place was brief, and with the common people the influence almost briefer still. It is a moot question as to how far really he had gone below the surface in order to ascertain the greater difficulties with which his preachers would have to contend. As in other parts of the Principality, so in this county, Mr. Wesley's work was devoted very largely in the interest of the Church of England. He spent considerable time at Llwyn-gwair, Tracoon, Newport ; he preached at Little Newcastle and other places in the northern parts of the county ; but with the exception of a small Society at Spittal and another at Roach, the upper half of the county was never occupied by Wesleyan Methodism.

Mr. Thomas Taylor, of whom Montgomery wrote his poem, '*The Christian Soldier*', passed through some parts of this county like a comet, attracted the attention of the people, and was in a fair way of doing great good. But he was soon removed elsewhere. The following year no preacher was appointed. In 1765 Thomas Newell was placed in charge of the work in Pembrokeshire and the adjoining counties. During successive years it was included in the Wales or West Wales Circuit, the three ministers itinerating throughout the whole of South Wales, and even some of the northern counties.

In 1771 the Pembrokeshire Circuit was formed. It included, in the early days, the greater part of the county of Carmarthen within its borders, and John Furz was its first superintendent. The following year Stephen Proctor and Charles Boon were the ministers appointed to the Circuit ; and in 1773 the superintendent was Richard Whatcoat, a holy, humble, and devoted minister, who in 1784 was ordained with Dr. Coke and Vasey by Mr. Wesley at Bristol for work in America, was afterwards elected Bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and finished his course with joy at Dover, U.S.A., July 5, 1806.

From 1776 to 1794, with the exception of two years, three ministers laboured year after year on this Circuit. Pembroke was honoured with the services of some of Mr. Wesley's best preachers, including Whatcoat, Samuel Bradburn, who became President of the Methodist Conference, and James Wood twice President, Thomas Roberts, and Joseph Cole.

In 1771 the membership when the Circuit was formed was 112. Ten years later it had increased to 181. The Circuit book, to which the writer has access, contains a list of all the names and states, residences and occupations, of the members of the Circuit. The numbers are—Haverfordwest, 60 ; Spittal, 12 ; Carmarthen, 52 ; Roach, 19 ; Pembroke, 22 ; Houghton, 4 ; Marloes, 4 ; Warren, 8. The first name on the Haverfordwest list is that of George Richards, a labourer, and his wife Anne is second on the same register. Barbara Surman, living in Goat Street, and Mary Vaughan of Tracoon, sister of Admiral Vaughan, are returned as 'gents.' John Green comes eighth on the list, a name which has ever been honourably connected with Methodism in the county, and is still verdant, fragrant, and influential. There is Nathaniel Davies, a surgeon ; several Phillipses, a name which has also an honourable place in connection with Haverford Methodism ; a number of Welsh names, Joneses, Davieses, Lewises, Jenkinses, and a few English or foreign names. The first name on the Pembroke list is that of William Symonds, a saddler, living in High Street. James Davis is the second name, a stone mason, with five males and fifteen females. Codd is found twice among the fifteen—a name which has long been prominently connected with Pembroke Methodism. The figures for 1791, the year of Mr. Wesley's death, show that the total membership had declined thirteen during the decade. Pembroke, 21 ; Haverfordwest, 68 ; Roach, 23 ; Marloes, 5 ; Spittal, 7 ; Walton, 5 ; Carmarthen, 39—total, 168. The greatest decrease is at Carmarthen, Haverfordwest and Roach reporting an increase. At Pembroke there was no class-leader excepting

the preacher, who met the class after the Sunday evening service, John Hyatt, a weaver, acting as an assistant at times. At Haverfordwest, John Green, William Thomas the mason, and Jane Jones a shopkeeper, were leaders. Jane Warren, whose work with the children attracted the attention of Mr. Wesley, was added to their number. Miss Warren was a most devoted and efficient worker, and did much for Methodism in the town. Miss Mary Vaughan of Tracoon, sister of Admiral Vaughan, notwithstanding the long distance from that lovely mansion to Haverfordwest, was a faithful member in Mr. Green's class. Ellen Wogan, the eldest daughter of Mr. John Wogan of Weston, near Haverfordwest, who with her brother was coheiress of the estate, and who became the devoted wife of the Rev. Thomas Roberts, was another faithful member in William Thomas's class. Anne Morris, Ruana Jones of St. Martin's, Mary Davies, the daughter of Dr. Davies, were all ladies of means, and constituted a band of Christians of high culture and character, whose exemplary lives added strength and loveliness to the Wesleyan Society at Haverfordwest. William Wade of Roach was a man of substantial reputation and usefulness in his locality.

Reviewing the work throughout the Circuit, it was far from being satisfactory. The Pembrokeshire Circuit, with three ministers on the ground the greater part of the time, and Mr. Wesley's frequent visits and general supervision, had been in existence for twenty years, and the nett increase of membership was only 56. True, new chapels had been erected at Haverfordwest, Pembroke, Carmarthen, and Roach; but during the last decade the membership had declined. Mr. Wesley was dissatisfied. Writing of his last visit, he says that the Circuit had been 'vilely neglected'; the assistant 'he could trust no more.' He therefore sent to Thomas Roberts, who was appointed at the recent Conference to the Bristol Circuit, to go at once to take charge of this the 'most important Circuit in Wales.' Mr. Roberts felt very keenly having to leave

Bristol on such short notice, but he had learned obedience, and set out to meet Mr. Wesley in order to take charge of the Pembrokeshire Circuit. Mr. Roberts was only a young minister of four years' standing, but of a fine personal presence, elegant in manners, an eloquent and able preacher, with a sparkle of poetic genius, and withal a true man of God. He resided at Haverfordwest, and here, as in other places throughout the Circuit, his labours were greatly blessed. The congregations and Societies considerably improved. Mr. Roberts's preaching was more in accord with the Welsh instincts and traditions than any of those previously appointed by Mr. Wesley. The people heard him gladly, and many conversions followed, and a new era was commenced in the history of Wesleyan Methodism in the county. Mr. Roberts became attached to the people; ultimately he married Miss Wogan of Weston, a most excellent lady, who had, through her superior education and accomplishments, been prepared to move in high circles in the world of gaiety, but who resolutely broke away from all the riches and treasures of this life to become the wife of a Methodist minister. Mr. Roberts remained in the Circuit for nearly four years, and his labours were highly appreciated, and abundantly owned of God. The total membership increased to 207 the following year, which was a considerable gain, the greatest increase being at Haverfordwest, which had now become the head of the Circuit. In 1795 a small Society was formed at Hubberstone with 7 members. In 1796 the Society was formed at Milford; at the following Conference they had 27 members. The Rev. James Buckley was second minister, and, like Mr. Roberts, he was interested in Wales, and his work was attended with better results. Nangle and Killana Societies were formed. Dale, too, had a few members, and was regularly visited. In 1805 Carmarthen Circuit, and two years later Pembroke Circuit, was formed. At the time of the division of the Circuit there were Societies at Haverfordwest, Pembroke,

Tenby, Milford, Roach, Spittal, Nangle, Southern Pits, Narbeth, and Marloes, having a membership of 232. During the three years that Richard Treffry was superintendent of the Haverfordwest Circuit, the work greatly prospered, and new Societies were formed at Camrose, St. Ishmael, and Creamson. The Haverfordwest Society developed into a strong, vigorous church ; Milford also improved, and the finances went up, and a new feeling of confidence, which had steadily grown from the time Thomas Roberts entered the Circuit, possessed the people. When Mr. Treffry left the Circuit in 1809, the membership was as follows :—Haverfordwest, 146 ; Milford, 66 ; Marloes, 28 ; Dale, 21 ; Ishmael, 17 ; Spittal, 17 ; Roach, 13 ; Camrose, 10—total, 318. There was a small Society formed at Whiston, with about 8 members, but they were not returned that year.

If the position of the town Society is judged by the Connexional contributions, the particulars of 1811 will be of interest to the reader. The yearly collection, £15 ; Kingswood, £9, 9s. ; for British prisoners, £11 ; to meet Conference debt, £11 ; for guarding our privileges, £10 ; missionary, £5, 16s. 6d. ; preachers' fund, £12, 3s. 6d. The loyalty, generosity, and strength of the Society is sufficiently shown in the above figures, and no further comment is needed. The first chapel, which Mr. Wesley described as the 'neatest in Wales,' was erected in 1772 ; the original deed is dated September 29, 1771, and Mr. Wesley preached in it in August 1772. The first trustees were Thomas Hughes, a papermaker ; John Jenkins, of the same occupation ; William Thomas, carpenter ; John Green, glazier ; Nathaniel Davies, surgeon ; Thomas Germain ; David Evans, cordwinder ; David Davies, cordwinder ; Joseph Abbott, clerk. The lease, given for 99 years at an annual rental of £2, was extended for ten years in 1818 ; and the new chapel then erected was regarded as one of the best in Wales, having seating accommodation for between 800 and 900. The people contributed large sums,

leaving a debt of between £500 and £600. A new batch of trustees were made, which included, in addition to some of the old ones, John Bowen, merchant; Thomas Phillips, surveyor of taxes; John Phillips, mercer; James Brown, merchant; Richard Gibbon, baker; Joseph Potter, stationer; James Isaac, mason; Richard Rees, merchant; and Richard Rees, grocer; Daniel Williams and James Higgon, timber merchants; Patrick Walters, tailor; William Jenkins, baker; James Jenkins, brazier; William James, carpenter; William Walters, innkeeper; David Lewis, shopman. There were 130 members in Society at Haverfordwest, and a good congregation. The class-leaders were Thomas and John Phillips, John Bowen, James Brown, Thomas Hughes, and Richard Rees; and Richard Gibbon was subsequently appointed a leader. With such a group of intelligent, godly, devoted men, a commodious chapel, and with a succession of able ministers as they were able to secure, the work of the Lord prospered in their hands. After the opening of the new chapel there was a considerable improvement in the congregation, and in every branch of the work. But for some years the increase in membership was not very marked. In 1827 John Smith took charge of the Circuit, considerable life was infused into the Societies, and a sustained improvement in the finances and membership was experienced during the ministry of that good man (who had for his colleague John Bond), and which was maintained during the superintendency of Thomas Armett and John H. Rowe, the latter having for his colleague Aquila Barber.

Probably the most prosperous time in the history of the Circuit was during the superintendency of Edward Jones, Bathafarn, who had now been for many years in the English work. The people, notwithstanding that they worshipped through the English language, were Welsh in instinct, sympathy, and taste, and they were able to find in Mr. Jones's preaching gospel truths better suited to their thoughts

and sympathies. They were therefore drawn to the man and his mission. The result was that membership and finances went up steadily quarter after quarter. By the end of the first year the income of the Haverfordwest Society had increased over £10 a quarter, and the increase in membership was in even greater proportion.

At the midsummer quarterly meeting, the stewards, feeling themselves in a better financial position, decided to give their superintendent an increased and stated stipend—£120, with house and all other expenses paid. By the end of his second year the membership in the Circuit had increased considerably. Haverfordwest probably reached its highest mark in his time, for at the Christmas quarterly meeting, 1834, they returned 371 fully accredited members, the total membership in the Circuit being 606. It was during Mr. Jones's time that the Langum Society was commenced; and in March 1834 this Society paid its first sum, £1, 4s. 10d., to the Quarterly Board. When Mr. Jones and his faithful colleague, Thomas Williams, left the Circuit in 1835, there was a membership at Langum of 41. Haverfordwest, Milford, Hakin, Spittal, Marloes, Roach, and Dale were all in a prosperous state. The work was maintained by his successors, John Slater and John Boyd. It was in 1840, during the superintendency of the Rev. J. W. Button, with George Southern as colleague, that the high-water mark was reached, 693 members being returned that year. In 1880 the chapel was entirely renovated, at a cost of £1300 (four years previously new schools had been erected); the freehold site has also been procured, and the chapel and schools are nearly free from debt. The church is now in a condition in every way satisfactory, and is capable of carrying on important work. Haverfordwest has been the birthplace and spiritual home of many eminent Methodists.

There is considerable difficulty in finding the exact date of the formation of the Pembroke Society. Thomas Taylor

gathered a number of friends about him, who generously paid his expenses. Two men from Pembroke went to Carmarthen to meet Mr. Wesley, and they had the pleasure of guiding him to Tenby and Pembroke. During Mr. Wesley's third visit he preached in the room at the back of York Tavern, in the main street, where the Society, which was then formed, regularly held its meetings. Pembroke was the town in which lived a very large number of the *elite*; they gravitated here not only from the county but from various parts of South Wales. These people would crowd to hear Mr. Wesley preach, but they would not yield and become Methodists. From this room the little Society removed to a room near the Baptist place of worship, and now used as a carpenter's shop. In this place the few good Methodists held together for many a year without much growth. The membership was almost stationary for a long period, scarcely averaging 20. It was the head of the Circuit from 1771 to 1794, when Haverfordwest, which had in reality been the head from the beginning, was so designated. In 1807 it was separated from Haverfordwest and made the head of a new Circuit. At that time it had 19 members. Two ministers were appointed. There were small Societies at Southern Pits, Narbeth, and Tenby, about 100 members in the Circuit, Southern Pits having by far the strongest Society. Narbeth and Tenby were very weak. In 1822 a noble effort was made by the small Society, which had by this time grown somewhat stronger, and a new chapel was erected, and opened for divine worship by the Rev. Samuel Dunn, who was the second minister on the Circuit that year. At Southern Pits there was a good Society. Mr. Tribe, who was a most devoted leader for a considerable period, had been a sailor, and in his early life served under Lord Nelson as coxswain. This good man died at Pembroke Dock at the advanced age of ninety-one. The Misses Hill, three ladies of the old Methodist type, whose loyalty, fidelity, and devotion to the Church of their

choice was an incentive to others, were also long and lovingly attached to the Society in this place.

The removal in 1818 of the Naval Yard from Milford to Pater—which is now known as Pembroke Dock—was an epoch of great importance to the Pembroke Circuit, which was then comparatively feeble, while the Pembroke Society, which was the largest, had only 46 members. It was, however, a great loss to the Haverfordwest Circuit. Small Societies had been formed at Carew, Jefferson, Cresselly, Jameson, Warren, and Pater. At the latter place a few families met together in the house of Mr. John Allen in the front street. In that house Mr. Allen and his wife, William Bate and his wife, William Spriggs and his wife, George Warren and his wife, William Stevenson and his wife, George Evans, Alexander Frayer, B. Stephens, Richard Allen, Eleanor Olray, and Elizabeth Price were the members of the Society. It is interesting to notice how husband and wife went together. These were united, warm-hearted, and spiritually-minded plain people. The work prospered, and they soon had to find a larger room and remove to Middle Street. In this house the first Sunday school was established by Richard Treganna, who used to take his book and go from house to house to collect as many children as the parents were willing to send; and during the winter a lantern was suspended on a pole at the door of the house to direct people to the place of evening worship. In 1820 the friends were determined to secure a chapel. A site was procured at a nominal rental on the Barrack Hill, the upper part of the town, and a chapel was erected, which was opened for public worship by the Revs. John Wood, Philip Rowlings, and Samuel Dunn. The Society in the place was increasing rapidly. The town and population extended and increased, and the old chapel became too small for the Society, which had then nearly reached 200 members; and in 1848 Wesley Chapel was built, the Revs. John Wood and Dr. Beaumont being the preachers at the opening services.

In 1867 it was found necessary, to meet the applications continually made for sittings, to enlarge this chapel, which was reopened by the Rev. W. R. Rogers, Marmaduke C. Osborn, John Martin, and John Codd. The membership had then reached 255, and the chapel is now the largest Methodist chapel in the Principality. Pembroke Chapel has been rebuilt, and is now one of the ornaments of that formerly gay town; and both at Pembroke and the Dock Wesleyan Methodism occupies an influential position. A good chapel has been built at Nayland and another at Pennar; at both of these places there are good Societies. Carew, Redberth, Jameson, and Pembroke Ferry have small but interesting Societies. The Pembroke Circuit was divided in 1870, when Tenby was made the head of a new Circuit with Narbeth, Saunderson's Foot, Jefferson, Stepaside, and Moreton. Tenby, although visited by Thomas Taylor and Mr. Wesley, did not accept Wesleyan Methodism for many years. The Rev. Thomas Roberts was appointed as an extra preacher to Carmarthen in 1808, with liberty to go wherever he thought it advisable. He, however, remained in this position four years, preaching as his health would allow him, and visiting his old friends in Pembrokeshire and elsewhere. During this period he became deeply interested in Tenby, which was becoming an attractive watering-place, frequented by visitors from England and Ireland. The Rev. James Buckley says 'that he built a chapel, and contributed to the principal support of a preacher.' Mr. Roberts afterwards spent some time there with much satisfaction, sowing the seed of divine truth in hope it would bring forth fruit after many days, and appear to his joy in the day of harvest. During those years there was a great revival of religion in Wales, and Mr. Roberts, with the Rev. Owen Davies, visited a great many places in the Principality. The crowded congregations and great excitement proved, however, too much for Mr. Roberts's feeble frame. He was carried home, stricken by an illness

which lingered for a considerable time, and he was not able to preach again till the end of the year. At the end of the year a most marvellous watch-night was held at Carmarthen, at which Richard Treffry, Owen Davies, and Thomas Roberts took part. Mr. Roberts was carried to the chapel. ‘The three preachers,’ says Mr. Buckley, ‘had mutually agreed to take the same text, “My times are in Thy hand,” and each to take their part. This excited great interest; a holy solemnity attended the service, such as will be remembered in the day of the Lord. The discourses were afterwards published, and concluded with a hymn penned by Mr. Roberts for the occasion.’ The Tenby Society had been formed prior to this. In 1806 were presented to the quarterly meeting and Conference the first returns from this most attractive summer resort. The number of members was only ten, but there was the nucleus of a church. The chapel built by Mr. Roberts was central, but afterwards became buried by other buildings. For many years this was regarded as a great disadvantage, and during the ministry of the Rev. James Pearce a most worthy effort was made, and a new chapel erected in the main street leading from the railway station to the town. Tenby was also made the head of a new Circuit in 1870, Mr. Pearce being its first superintendent. The new chapel is a handsome and commodious building in a prominent position, and has a promising future before it. It is the opinion of many competent judges that separation from Pembroke was a mistake. A similar mistake has, alas! been made by other Circuits in the Principality, retarding the growth of Methodism. The other Societies in the Circuit have struggled on well, and are still struggling, surrounded by many churches and sparse populations.

The Milford Society was formed in 1796, during the ministry of Cleland Kirkpatrick, William Pearson, and James Gill. There were a few Methodists in some of the surrounding villages prior to that date, but that year Milford first

appears on the Circuit book with 27 members. The first leader was James Wreath, and Anne Griffith was appointed leader of the women's class immediately after. The work of God prospered at Milford, and speedily John Thomas and Elizabeth Williams were in charge of good classes. William Gould, Hugh Richards, and Margaret Davies were entrusted with classes. The Society became second only to Haverfordwest, and was a great source of strength to the Circuit, and like the good Methodists of the Circuit town they were generous supporters of Connexional funds. Mrs. Peregrine of Hubberstone, Captain and Mrs. Painter, Captain Williams, Hugh Richards, and Mr. Isaacs were always ready to assist every good work. In 1808 a lease on three lives at thirty-five shillings a year was secured from the Right Hon. C. F. Greville, and a new chapel was erected, the trustees of which were John Allen, Abram Williams of Hubberstone, John Davies, mariner, of the same place ; Charles Nuttall, mariner ; Edward Pritchard, saddler ; Hugh Richards, smith ; and John Bowen and David Falconor of Haverfordwest. The chapel was not very large or pretentious, but well adapted to the requirements at the time. The removal of the Navy Yard from Milford in 1818 was as great a disaster to Milford as it was a gain to Pembroke. The Milford Methodists held class meetings at villages in the immediate neighbourhood, such as Hubberstone, New Milford, Staynton, Johnson, and Hakin. At the latter place, which was first returned as a separate Society in 1831, a chapel was erected and a promising church established. The membership at Milford and at Hakin was about equal, the latter place slightly in excess in numbers, whilst the former took the lead financially. For many years the second minister has resided in this most quiet and delightful place, and the Methodists have been able to hold their own, and recently have made progress.

The Dale Chapel was erected in 1809, the lease being dated March 8th, and the ground-rent sixpence a year. The

Marloes Chapel was built by Mr. Allen about the year 1775, and by him presented to the Rev. John Wesley for the use of 'the people called Methodists.' The Roach Chapel, too, was built by admirers of Wesley, and he opened it for divine worship on August 16, 1784. Spittal Chapel was built by subscription. The Societies at Roach and Spittal were formed during Mr. Wesley's days ; in both places he preached, Thomas Matthews being the first member and probably the first leader at Spittal, and Anne Rees being the first at Roach. William Wade was very soon made a leader, and for many years Francis Rees was a most faithful leader of that Society. For some years previously there had been small Societies at Nangle, Killana, Waterson, and Rose Market, but the members removed or were merged with other Societies, and the names of those places disappear. The Hearson Mountain Chapel was erected in the spring of 1815 ; the trustees were leading men at Haverfordwest, and the building was opened practically free from debt. Mount Gilead Chapel was also supported by the same good people. Many of the villages of Pembrokeshire are far from the head of the Circuit and inconvenient to reach, and the population so sparse as to make the Circuit very difficult and costly to work, in consequence of which Methodism has scarcely held its own. The Congregationalist and Baptist ministers have been able to take charge of two or three of these churches, hold a farm or the village shop, and live among their people, and they have been better able to build up their Societies than have our Methodist ministers. In the early history of Methodism the evangelist was welcomed and his work was more acceptable ; to-day the idea of the common people is that of the pastorate. A minister to whom they can look up for guidance, example, and instruction,—one who will visit the sick, the bereaved, and distressed, and take a general spiritual oversight of their whole lives and interests,—one who will baptize their children, marry the young people, and bury their dead, is the ideal in

our time. So strong is this feeling in some localities that it is not an uncommon occurrence to find the Methodist local preacher becoming the Congregational minister, taking up his abode among the people and developing a Congregational church out of Methodist material. From a denominational standpoint we are losers, but it should not be forgotten that our doctrines are still preached and souls are being saved.

Welsh Wesleyan Methodism was never able to take deep root in the county of Pembroke. The lower side of the county had become Anglicised before the introduction of Welsh Methodism, and the upper side was largely won by the Baptists and Congregationalists, while the Calvinistic Methodists, too, had a few substantial churches. Mr. Wesley himself visited the Welsh portion of the county several times, but as he was allowed to preach in the churches and was entertained by the aristocracy, the Welsh people were scarcely touched by his preaching. The isolated position and the thinly populated districts of Pembrokeshire would also to some extent account for this small success. The first Welsh preachers to visit the city of St. David's were David Jones (2nd) and William Davies (Africa), who were then stationed on the Lampeter Circuit. In the year 1808 they reached St. David's on a Saturday night, and were granted permission to preach in the Lion Inn. The Methodist doctrines were fully explained and ably defended by the preachers, and the effects were as startling as a thunderbolt. The new doctrine, or heresy as it was generally called, was the one topic of conversation for miles round. The next day the people came together in crowds to see and hear these dangerous heretics. Their curiosity, however, gave way to prejudice, a feeling of indignation and enmity was stirred up in the minds of the people, and was zealously propagated from one to the other, and many caught the contagion. They came together determined to oppose the dangerous teaching of these strangers, and if possible to drive them out of the city. There were a

few who, like the Bereans, with open minds were desirous of knowing the truth, but they were the feeble minority. The preachers faithfully and fearlessly proclaimed the fulness of salvation in Christ for all men, invited all to accept it there and then, and told the people if they would reject so great a salvation they would themselves be responsible for their own damnation. Such truths were regarded as blasphemous, and caused many of the people great concern, whilst some almost dreaded that the judgment of God would come upon the neighbourhood if such heretics were allowed to remain in the city. There were a few who thought there was a great deal of force in what was said, and decided to inquire more carefully into the matter; certain it is that the visit of the two Wesleyan preachers created a sensation the like of which they had not experienced in that neighbourhood before. They brought the sword into the quaint old city, and soon father and son were up in arms against each other, husband and wife took sides, and the inhabitants generally were in a state of great excitement and turmoil. Many were set thinking and reading, people grouped together, and discussions were carried on day after day and night after night. The smithy, the shoemaker's shop, and the market-place were the scenes of heated almost pugilistic discussions. A Mr. Harry Harry was one of the first to accept this new doctrine. Harry was not a great scholar, but was well read in Scripture, and had a retentive memory, a pleasant voice, and great aptitude in prayer, and in that locality he became a conspicuous debater. Harry was one day going to his work, and on his way met a leading Calvinist, who was also on his way to the same place, and without a moment's delay they plunged into the debate on the five disputed points. They sat down on the side of a hill, and there continued the discussion, forgetting time and toil and care, forgetting to eat their food until reminded how long they had been discussing the matter by the setting of the sun and the shadows of the night. Then

they returned home, contending that the great question had been settled once for all, but unfortunately for the finality of the settlement, each claimed the victory.

The opponents of Wesleyan Methodism persisted in their opposition, and various methods were adopted to annoy, disturb, or drive them out of the city. One day when one of the 'Welsh Lions,' as they were frequently called, was preaching in the open air, one man brought his fat pig as near the preacher as he could, and proceeded to kill the animal, hoping thereby to draw aside the attention of the congregation, and to drown the voice of the preacher. On another occasion, a shoemaker brought his hammer and lap-stone, with which he made as much noise as he could during the whole time the preacher was preaching. St. David's was first put on the plan as one of the regular preaching-places in the Cardigan Circuit during the year 1808, when William Davies (Africa), David Jones (2nd), and John Davies were the ministers of that 'Continent of a Circuit,' as one of the Presidents of the Conference termed it in after-years. The first house in which services were held and a Society formed was that of John Morris, a mariner, who, years after, was lost at sea. Mrs. Morris became one of the first members of the little Wesleyan Society. She was joined by Reuben and William Peacock, William Morris, David Pardo, and Sally Harris (who became noted for the beauty of her Christian life, her happy testimony as to the change she had experienced, and her readiness at all times to witness to the grace of God). Henry Stephen, one of the most influential and respected men in the city, also joined the Methodists, and became a class-leader and steward, and up to his death in 1854 was a tower of strength in himself. Mr. Harris of Treginis and his wife also identified themselves with the persecuted Wesleyans. He left a legacy in support of the cause in the city of St. David's, which has and still brings in about £12 a year. Mr. and Mrs. Roberts of Mynydd-du identified themselves

with the Society. John Llewellyn of Ty-gwyn continued a zealous class-leader up to the time of his death in 1830 ; his brother Henry was equally zealous, also Mr. and Mrs. Williams of Penlan, the parents of Mrs. Dr. Jones ; and the Owens of Harglodd and Gwryd-bach. With these families connected with the Society there was not much harm in the persecution of the narrow-minded and ignorant persons of the neighbourhood. The friends hired a cottage near the Cross, in which they held services for many years. It was a small, inconvenient place, and being, too, so far from the head of the Circuit they were frequently without preachers. In 1811 Mr. Bryan was expected to preach at St. David's, and his visit was the subject of considerable conversation. Two well-known gentlemen of means, but not of very exemplary conduct, went into the preaching-place and found that the congregation waiting for the preacher were largely of the female sex, and both went out without much delay. But after they had got out on the street they met a neatly-dressed and intelligent-looking gentleman wending his way towards the preaching-place. They concluded that he was the preacher, and one of them asked Mr. Bryan, ‘Are you to preach here to-day?’ ‘Yes, gentlemen,’ said Mr. Bryan, with great politeness ; ‘I have come here with that intention.’ ‘Well,’ said one of the inquirers, ‘we have just been inside the preaching-place, and we could not see any one there except a number of harlots.’ Mr. Bryan instantly picked up a small stone and put it in the speaker’s hand, saying, ‘Good morning to you, gentlemen,’ and went in to those good people, and a service of great power was experienced.

In 1812 St. David's was made head of a Circuit, and Thomas Thomas was appointed minister. In 1815 it was again included in the Cardigan Circuit, and so remained till 1838, when it became the head of a Circuit again. When the Rev. Lot Hughes was appointed to St. David's with John Davies as superintendent, an attempt was made to build a chapel, the difficulties in connection with the erection of which were

most trying. The work was given to a contractor, whose health failed before he had got half-way through, and he soon died. A second contract was made, and a second death followed. Mr. Roberts, one of the most active and zealous Wesleyan farmers, was hauling stones to the new building, and one day, while taking a load of stones towards the new chapel, the cart-wheel came off. This incident happened in front of the house of one of the greatest of Wesleyan persecutors, who was soon in ecstasies when he saw Mr. Roberts' trouble, and said that they were 'such wicked people that the judgments of God were falling upon them thick and fast.' 'Well,' said Mr. Roberts, 'this is nothing to you, but I have three other carts at home, and I will wear them all out, and more if necessary, in order to have the chapel built.' The next difficulty was finding a contractor to go on with the work, and this builder when found was greatly hampered by his own wife, who was so superstitious that she was in trouble daily, and in constant fear lest her husband too should die like the two previous contractors. She entreated him with tears and groans to have nothing to do with the people, who were manifestly under divine displeasure. The chapel, however, was completed and dedicated to the worship of God on the 18th September 1818, the Revs. John Davies, John Williams (1st), Lot Hughes, and J. Jenkins taking part in the services. The chapel was soon filled, and twelve years later was enlarged, Mr. Harris, who had contributed handsomely towards the first erection, giving £100, which in those days was considered a marvellous gift. The work steadily increased during many years. The Rev. Henry Wilcox, a most able and successful minister, was a native of St. David's, as was also the Rev. Thomas Morgan, the present Chairman of the South Wales District, and the Rev. A. C. Pearce. Mr. Williams of Penlan and his sisters and Mrs. Owen, The Beehive, deserved a place with the very best and most loyal of Methodists. The Rev. Dr. Jones, who for many years was one of the most prominent of Wesleyan ministers in the

Principality, spent the last twenty years of his life in the city, where his mortal remains now rest in the burying-ground of the old Cathedral. Over his grave we heard the echo respond, ‘Well done, good servant,’ as a voice from heaven as the writer offered prayer at the burial service. The residence of Mr. Delta R. Davies, F.A.Ph.S., and his wife, the only daughter of Dr. Jones, at St. David’s, has been to the Wesleyan Society a great blessing.

In Solfa, a large village about four miles nearer Haverfordwest than St. David’s, the Wesleyan preachers visited for the first time in 1810, and preached a full, free, and perfect salvation. They took their stand near the workshop of Philip Jenkins, afterwards preached in a room of the Hope and Anchor, removing later on to the Square and Compass. In 1812 a chapel was built, the original trustees being from St. David’s and Haverfordwest. In 1828 the Rev. John Davies, the superintendent of the Circuit, was allowed to collect throughout the district in aid of this chapel, and he obtained £171, 7s. 3d., which, being more than the debt, the balance was given to the Ceinewydd Chapel, in the county of Cardigan. Mr. John Davies, who afterwards lived in The Mariners, and his sons, with Mr. Bowen and his daughters were attached to, and had a long and most honourable connection with, Methodism in this place, the representatives of both families being still identified with the cause. For many years there was a very interesting Society at Solfa, the members being most loyal, zealous, and faithful; but as nearly all the members died childless, and the population scarcely held its own, neither here nor at St. David’s has the Methodist Society retained its numerical strength. Preaching was regularly carried on at Cilgeran, Fishguard, Trefdraeth, Trelettert, and other small places in the northern part of the county. At the latter place, which is near Trecoo, a chapel was built, a Society formed, and a promising congregation gathered. It was, however, twelve miles away from St. David’s, the head of the Circuit, which only had one minister, and being frequently

without a preacher gradually went down, and the chapel was disposed of.

The name of Mr. J. Dawkins of Pembroke, a Justice of the Peace, a leading Methodist, a large giver, and an exemplary Christian gentleman, will long retain an honoured place in the annals of Pembroke Methodism, while the Circuit will find his legacies a permanent benefit. W. E. Seccombe was a diligent worker in connection with the Church, the Sunday school, and social movements, was chief magistrate of the borough ; his name will long be an inspiration to young men. John Brown of Haverfordwest, the county historian and the diligent class-leader ; William Phillips, the cultured and popular preacher ; and James Phillips, preacher, class-leader and public man, were men well known beyond the county of Pembroke. There are a number of families connected with the Haverfordwest Circuit, who carry on the work of their ancestors with intelligent zeal and generosity worthy of their past history—W. P. Ormond, a Justice of the Peace ; Messrs. Thomas Farrow, F. E. Green, Vaughan, Bleddyn, Gibbon, Beddow, Morse, Llewellyn, G. P. Ormond, and others ; while Pembroke Circuit can rejoice in having the Trayler Brothers, who are magistrates ; John Green, a descendant of one of the first class-leaders in the county ; Davies, Copplestone, Seymour, Lewis, Jenkins, Hobbins, Skyrme, and others capable of doing great service to the cause of Christ. With such men Methodism will anticipate the future with confidence and hopefulness.

Pembrokershire has sent out to the Wesleyan ministry several able and devoted men—William Williams (A), William Perkins, Josiah Evans, John Codd, J. B. Algert, Watkin Jones, and others. Dr. Ebenezer E. Jenkins family were Pembrokershire people. The local preachers' list is a most honourable one, worthy of the best traditions of Methodism, while a noble band of class-leaders and Sunday-school teachers might be mentioned. Methodism has a fairly good position in the Haverfordwest and Pembroke Circuits, which are capable of doing much for Christ and Methodism in that part of the Principality.



REV'D DR. CHARLES ROBERTS.

PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE 1885

Engraved by G. D. DODGE from a Photograph by APPLEY, NEWCASTLE.

CHAPTER XV.

MONTGOMERYSHIRE.

Mr. Wesley in Montgomeryshire—Charles Wesley and Williams, Pantycelyn—Mr. Wesley at Llanidloes, Newtown, Welshpool, Tyddyn, Machynlleth—Richard and Martin Rodda—Thomas Olivers—First Society at Pentre Llifiwr—Penybank—Berriew—Newtown—Brecon Circuit—Welsh Preaching—Llanidloes Circuit formed—Societies formed at Rhiad, St. Harmon, Caersws, Trefeglwys, Carno—Hugh Hughes's successful Work—Llanfyllin—Mr. Bryan's Visit to his Native Place—The Congregational Minister's Scars—New Chapel—Llanrhiaid—Llangynog—Pengarnedd—Llanfair—Meifod—Llanerfyl—Pontcadvan—Machynlleth—Mr. Foulkes's Hospitality and Death—The Quarterly Meeting—Jones, Bathafarn, Trustees—Robert Rees—Tycerig—Abercegir—Cwmddywi—Blaenypant—Eglwysfach—John Rees and Discipline—New Chapel—Leaders—Local Preachers—Eminent Ministers, etc.

MR. WESLEY passed through the county of Montgomery for the first time on the 5th August 1747. He rode from Builth over the rough mountains of Radnorshire and Montgomeryshire into Merionethshire. He probably went through Rhaiadr, Llanidloes, Machynlleth, the Corris Valley to Dolgelly on his way to Carnarvon. The prospect was one of the finest, he says, he had seen in his life. Passing over the wild mountain scenery from Llanidloes to Machynlleth, with ‘broken rocks of every size, shape, and colour,’ overlooking a narrow glen here and there on his way, then coming in sight of the picturesque vale of Dyfi, fortified on each side by soldier-like rows of trees protected by mountain beyond mountain, with the River Dyfi moving leisurely on its way towards its home. The ride to the Corris Valley, with its

many turnings and endings, with its trees and rocks, with its wild river, sometimes dashing madly and tempestuously over rocks, other times peacefully as a sleeping child resting in deep pools under overhanging cliffs. The wild scenery on the way to Dolgelly, and then the view of the Mawddach Valley, presents one of the most gorgeous and captivating sights in the kingdom, one which would fire the imagination of a feebler mind than that of the Apostle of Methodism, and inspire him to seek the ‘wings of the morning’ to mount and fly from earth to heaven. No wonder Wesley said the spectacle presented was one of the finest he had seen in his life.

On his return from Ireland he reached Llanidloes on Friday, August 28, and probably spent the night there. We have no indication of a service being held, although, when we remember there were in that town many who knew the English language, it is pretty safe to assume that either formally or otherwise he would avail himself of the opportunity of explaining to the people the gospel of free grace. Charles Wesley in company with Williams, Pantycelyn, went on a preaching tour during the same year in the neighbourhood of Garth, though whether he reached Llanidloes is not certain. On Monday, February 22, 1748, Mr. John Wesley leaving Garth, where he had been for four days, unable to face the snow-covered hills and drifts, ‘a little before sunrise we took horse,’ he writes, ‘it being clear and sharp,’ about eleven reaching Llanidloes. Mr. Wesley was not expected, but one of the inhabitants very earnestly pressed him to preach; the crier was probably sent round, and in an hour’s time a large congregation assembled in the market-place, where he preached. The following March, when Charles Wesley was returning from Ireland, broken down in health, he probably passed through Llanidloes on his way to his hospital home at Garth, which place he reached on Friday, 25th, in a very feeble state.

John Wesley came to Llanidloes again on Monday, April 10, 1749, preaching in the market-place, and, notwithstanding the piercing wind which nearly took away his voice, he was encouraged by the attention of the people, who remained bare-headed, so wrapped in the gospel message that they forgot entirely the cold biting wind. He then went to ‘a village seven miles away,’ probably Carno, where he was received with open arms, and was gladly supplied with such fare as they had (hospitality is a characteristic of the Montgomeryshire people), and then a three hours’ ride brought him to Dinas Mawddwy.

In March 1750, accompanied by Christopher Hopper and Mr. Phillips of Maesmynys, Mr. Wesley came to Llanidloes, which he reached greatly fatigued, but after an hour’s sleep was much better, and continued his journey through Machynlleth to Dolgelly, where he spent the night at the inn kept by John Lewis.

On Monday, March 22, 1756, Mr. Wesley in company with Mr. Phillips, rode after the service at Builth to Rhaiadr, passing the next day through Llanidloes and Machynlleth to Dolgelly. The whole country presented one wild expanse of snow-clad mountains and valleys; and as no path could be seen, the journey was not without much difficulty and danger, but Dolgelly was reached before sunset.

Mr. Wesley’s next visit to Llanidloes was on Wednesday, July 24, 1764. Coming from Shrewsbury—he would probably call at Welshpool and Newtown—he reached Llanidloes in time to preach in the market-place about two that afternoon. Mr. Wesley and his companion proceeded to Fair Rhos in Cardiganshire, which place he reached between eleven and twelve, having been in the saddle and preaching since four o’clock that morning.

On August 1, 1768, Mr. Wesley left Shrewsbury, and probably passed through the same towns, resting his horse and himself possibly by preaching as on other occasions.

True, he makes no reference to any services being held, but we know there were many services he held which are not mentioned by himself.

On Wednesday, August 9, 1769, he reached Welshpool, where the bailiff had previously promised the use of the Town Hall; but on second thoughts he declined, and Mr. Wesley rode on to Newtown, where at about one o'clock he took his stand in the market-place, which was then in the centre of Broad Street. Before he had been there many minutes a man by the name of Evans, the landlord of the New Inn, with a stick in his hand, came in cursing and blaspheming, and striking all that stood in his way. The stick was taken from him; but as the noise increased Mr. Wesley retired to the Lower Bryn farmhouse, which was then occupied by a Mr. Hardcox, who was probably favourable to Wesley and his preaching. Mrs. Corbett, the housekeeper, provided some refreshment for Mr. Wesley, became one of the first members of Society in the town, and often prided herself that she had entertained the great Apostle of Methodism. In the evening Mr. Wesley preached at Tyddyn Hall, the residence of the Bowens, about two miles from Llanidloes, and wrote on a pane of glass, ‘In the name of Jesus, peace be to this house.’ The glass was taken from Tyddyn Hall some time ago, whilst repairs were being executed, and it has since come into the possession of Mr. D. Hamer of Llanidloes. The next morning Mr. Wesley preached at Llanidloes, and in the evening at the abbey in Cardiganshire. This was Mr. Wesley’s last visit to this county. Why he gave so little attention to Montgomeryshire, a county in which the English language was well known by many of the inhabitants, has been a mystery to many Methodist historians. Some assume that he withdrew from this sphere intentionally on account of its proximity to the centre of Howell Harris’s operations; but when it is remembered that Garth, Builth, Brecon, and localities to which he gave considerable attention were much

nearer Trevecca than Llanidloes, Newtown, Welshpool, this reply does not present a satisfactory solution. The probability is that Montgomery was rather out of his way to or from other important places, and that the demands of other places appeared according to his judgment more urgent and promising.

There is some doubt as to who were the first of his preachers who visited the county. There is an old local tradition that Richard Rodda, a good Cornishman, was the first, and that he preached in a few small places as early as 1765. Martin Rodda was the preacher appointed to Wales that year, and it is thought by some that he was the first. Richard did not enter the ministry till 1769, but about that time he visited Wales, ‘where he tarried four or five weeks, preaching in various parts.’ It is very possible that the brothers visited several towns and villages, preaching the gospel of free grace in each place. It is evident, however, that Thomas Olivers preached in the county prior to his entering the ministry, when on his way home to pay his debts he says that ‘he preached in most of the Societies which lay in his way.’ He had also arranged to preach at his uncle’s house on the Sunday. Lord H—u—rd, who met him on the previous Saturday, ‘damned him, swore at him,’ and actually commanded him to be put in the stocks. This was some time prior to October 1753. Thomas Olivers was the superintendent of the Chester Circuit, from whence he tells us that he ‘visited his native country, and he preached in Montgomery, Newtown, Llanidloes, and many other places. In Tregynon, where I was born, I preached once, and had most of the village to hear me. But when Mr. B—n—y, who owned most of the parish heard of it, he told my uncle, who with my grandfather had lived in that house nearly a hundred years, that if he encouraged me to preach in the village, he would turn him out immediately ; he also sent a servant to a cousin of mine, who lived in another parish, and told her the same.’

When Mr. Olivers came to Forden he met the minister, who threatened to punish him if he preached in that parish. ‘I have a licence,’ said Olivers, ‘and will not be hindered by any man in the parish ; no, nor by the Primate of All England.’ The clergyman spoke to him about ‘the divine right of the clergy,’ to which Olivers replied ‘that many of them were worldly-minded to a proverb, yea, and many of them are drunkards, swearers, pleasure-takers, etc., and you tell me that such a clergy are the only ministers of God.’ The clergyman found his match, and had nothing to say for himself. Mr. Olivers preached in the house of one of Mr. Tudor’s daughters.

In 1770 Brecon was made the head of what was called the North Wales Circuit, with William Henderson, William Pitt, and John Undrell as ministers. They travelled the counties of Brecon, Radnor, and Montgomery, holding services wherever they could find openings to do so, but for some years they were true evangelists. In 1776 services were held regularly at Pentre Llifiwr, to which place Thomas Carlile gave particular attention. Mr. John Evans of that village was led to give his heart to Christ, and notwithstanding the opposition of friends, invited the preachers to his house. Mr. Carlile accepted the invitation, and as he put his foot over the threshold said, ‘Peace be to this house.’ He greatly enjoyed his intercourse with the Methodist preachers, and made up his mind that this people should be his people. In the following year James Wood was the superintendent of the Circuit, and he set about organizing and consolidating the work. In the month of May 1778 the first Society class was formed, and Mr. John Evans was appointed the leader. This was probably the first Wesleyan Methodist Society formed in the county of Montgomery. The great-grandchildren of Mr. Evans are active Methodists at Newtown and elsewhere at the present time. At the time of his conversion John Evans resided near Llandyssil, but he

soon removed to Pentre Llifiwr, and for twenty years provided a resting-place for the ark of God. In 1798 the chapel was built. The site was given by Evan Nock, who heard Mr. Wesley preach at Newtown. It is said of him that he gave the milk of four cows daily to the workmen employed in building the chapel. He was a devoted man, always exhorting men to flee from the wrath to come, and so frequently in the attitude of prayer that, as the result of constant friction, corns grew upon his knees. His son was for fifty years a most useful local preacher. It was thought by some that John Blayney was the first to welcome the Methodist preachers in this locality. We have no reason to doubt this statement or to accept it. The chapel was built under the direction of the Rev. James Buckley in 1797, the trustees being John Evans, Evan Nock, John Humphreys of Berriew, John Williams, and Edward Arthur of Bettws, John Lewis, Richard Lewis, and Richard Wilson of Llandinam. The chapel cost £218. The friends subscribed £83; a collection was made by the Methodists of Chester, amounting to £12, 12s. 5d. The building was substantial, and stands well up to the present time. It will be seen from the above list of trustees that at Llandinam and Berriew there were Methodists who were willing to become responsible for the chapel at Pentre Llifiwr. At Gwynfynydd, in the parish of Llanwnog, there was a good woman by the name of Anne Reynolds, who was probably brought to a saving knowledge of the truth under Mr. Wesley's preaching at Llanidloes, and died in the full triumph of the Christian faith, March 13, 1807, after being a faithful member of the Methodist Society for upwards of forty years. A class-meeting was held at her house, from which probably sprang the Society at Caersws. A plot of land was given by Mr. John Lewis of Maesmawr, upon which the old Caersws Chapel was built. John Lewis was one of the early adherents of Wesleyan Methodism. Arthur Savage and John Bradley were also early identified

with the cause at Caersws. Mr. Richard Price of Neuadd-newydd was brought to a saving knowledge under the preaching of Cleland Kirkpatrick about the year 1794, and subsequently became a faithful and devoted leader of a class held in his own house, and of a second which was held at Carno, three miles away. Old Nellie Morgan of the Walk Mill was one of the zealous, eccentric, but devoted old-fashioned Methodists, who felt so much attached to the chapel that whenever the door was opened she was ever ready to enter, and was often there alone with God. Returning from the sanctuary on one occasion after a time of solitary meditation and prayer, she was asked how many had been at the meeting, in the happy consciousness of the divine presence she replied, ‘ Oh, there were two there ! ’ She loved the sanctuary, the place where God had promised His presence to His people. A class-meeting was also formed at an early date at Penybanc, Llandinam, in connection with which Richard Lewis and Richard Wilson were devotedly identified. Another class was formed at Berriew. We have already referred to John Humphreys as one of the trustees of Pentre Llifiwr Chapel, a good Methodist living at Berriew, and who probably was closely identified with the introduction of Methodism into that beautiful neighbourhood.

Newtown was visited by Wesley himself, Olivers also preached there, and very probably the first Methodist preachers to Montgomeryshire found their way to and preached in that important town. The first Society met in a house outside the old turnpike gate on the Tregynon Road, Abraham Goodwin, a carpenter, whose name is still on the buildings, being the first leader. At a later period, to avoid the noise and annoyance to which members were subjected in the town, another class was held at Cefnmawr, Mr. Edward Phillips being the leader. It is difficult to fix the exact date, but judging from other incidents it is probable that a small Society existed here prior to 1780. Some time after a

room in Ladywell Street was rented, in which the preaching services were held. In 1799 the Brecon Circuit was divided, Welshpool becoming the head of the new Circuit, to which William Hicks and John Hughes were the ministers appointed. Prior to this division one of the ministers resided at or near Welshpool. The Circuit was a wide one, including the whole of Montgomeryshire, portions of Radnor, Salop, and Denbigh, the second minister giving some of his time to the Shrewsbury Circuit. The two ministers only saw each other once a fortnight for an hour. Probably one of the ministers lived at Newtown and the other at Welshpool.

At Welshpool services were held for years at the house of John Taylor in Berriew Street. The Methodist Society at Welshpool met with considerable opposition. When John Jennings, who had resided near Welshpool during the year 1798, was holding his last service in that town before leaving the Circuit, which was followed by a love-feast, there was a mob outside the chapel doing all in their power to annoy the preacher and people. When the preacher was on his way to the house of Mr. John Roberts, in company with some of the friends, they were followed by the mob, cursing, swearing, shouting, ready to make an onslaught on the preacher if they could only get hold of him. They waited outside of the house, and when the friends who had gone with him in order to protect him left Mr. Roberts' house, they were roughly handled, and some of them badly beaten, their clothes being torn to tatters. This was the first news that Mr. John Hughes had to welcome him to his new Circuit. When Welshpool was made the head of the Circuit, a small chapel in Mount Street was rented, and a very strenuous effort made to place the Society on a better basis. There were a few good people there who were determined to live and die Methodists. Mrs. Aiken of Caethro, although a Church lady, joined 'the little flock.' Some time afterwards she came to reside in the town, and

gave her time, substance, and toil in the interest of the work of God. Mr. W. A. Rogers ; Price, the saddler ; John Roberts and his wife, who had formerly lived with Mrs. Fletcher of Madeley ; Evan Owen and his wife ; Robert Jones, collector of taxes ; and Mary Jones, were the members of the Society, with John Taylor previously referred to. The rent of the chapel was, however, more than they could raise ; hence they were obliged to give it up, and hire a small and dingy room in which to hold their services.

In the year 1800 the Conference appointed the Rev. Owen Davies and John Hughes to labour in North Wales, and very soon a new impetus was given to the work of God throughout the whole of North Wales. Owen Davies, a native of Denbighshire, who had been labouring with marked success in the English work for ten years, and had also occupied the distinguished position of Chairman of the Cornish District, was appointed the general superintendent of the North Wales Mission, and in 1804, Chairman of the North Wales District. John Hughes, his colleague, who had been labouring in Cardiff, Haverfordwest, and the previous year at Welshpool, was well qualified for the work. In the southern part of the Circuit this year was one of great prosperity. The Rev. John Hughes says that whilst the sun had gone back many degrees at Welshpool and Berriew there was a great revival in other parts of the Circuit, and Newtown, Llanidloes, and parts of Radnorshire were greatly blessed. In 1805 Edward Linnell was the superintendent of the Circuit. He was the son of a Wesleyan minister ; he himself had been an excise officer at Denbigh and Llansanan, was intimate with and had entertained Wesley at his house before he was induced to enter the ministry. He was a Welshified Englishman, and was sympathetic with the Welsh people, and well qualified for such a position. Mr. Edward Jones of Corwen was also appointed to the Circuit to take up Welsh work.

The Newtown Chapel, situated on the west side of New Church Street, now used as a warehouse, was begun in 1805, completed and opened the following summer. The Rev. Owen Davies, writing to Dr. Coke, February 4, 1806, says: ‘In Newtown there is a prospect of much good being done. The Society is daily increasing, and the new chapel nearly completed.’ To the Wesleyans belongs the honour of erecting the first Nonconformist place of worship in Newtown. The services of Mr. Linnell and his colleagues were greatly blessed. The following March Mr. Davies writes: ‘The chapel at Newtown, which was opened last summer, is far too small for the congregation. I had a meeting with the trustees last week, who have agreed to pull down one side of it, and to enlarge it a few yards, and erect a gallery.’ The enlarged chapel was also crowded, a Sunday school was formed, a vigorous church was established, and Newtown became one of the most prosperous Methodist churches in the Principality.

In connection with the Methodist Society at Newtown, Hugh Morgan, Benjamin Davies, David Jones, Mr. Hall, and the Misses Humphreys were the first class-leaders. David Jones was a very good man, but eccentric, plain, and outspoken. He would never hesitate to tell his members what he thought about them. A woman in his class was given to fault-finding, and when relating her experience in a complaining mood, was interrupted by her leader. ‘Go on,’ he said, rather sharply, ‘go on, and I will give you a plaster for that wound directly.’ Mr. Richard Morgan was a most valuable man. James Hargreaves, too, was so devoted to the Sunday school, and so profoundly beloved by the young people, that when he was old they would go to his house, assist to dress him, and in other ways wait upon him, and tradition says that they would carry him to the house of God. Richard Williams, John Miles, Evan Williams, and John Reynolds deserve honourable mention as pioneer workers in connection with the Wesleyan Society at Newtown. The population of Newtown

was under 2000, but the Wesleyan Society was large and influential, taking the first place among the Methodist Societies of that county. Llanidloes was the town of all others in the county which had been visited most frequently by Mr. Wesley, but there is no evidence that a Society had been formed prior to 1796. There were converts under Mr. Wesley's preaching. Thomas Olivers, James Wood, John Prickard, and others preached at Llanidloes. James Buckley, when a representative to the Welsh District Meeting which was held in that town in 1826, stated that he was the first to form a Society there. One of the first to identify himself with the Society was Mr. Rickets, who invited the preachers to his house, where services were frequently held, and the preachers hospitably entertained. The Rev. Lot Hughes says he was a good man, faithful to the end of his life, and happy in his death.

In 1799, when William Hicks and John Hughes were appointed to the Welshpool Circuit, Llanidloes was taken on the plan, more carefully attended to, and the work greatly prospered. Many good families identified themselves with the Society—men of influence and position in the town, such as D. Davies, the currier; Price Wilson, saddler; E. Lewis, grocer; R. Rees, and others. In 1800 a site was secured upon which to build a chapel from Mr. Edward Glynn of Shrewsbury, who also left in his will £150 in order to reduce the debt. The Society was continued as a portion of the Welshpool Circuit up to the year 1807, when it became the head of a new Circuit. In the spring of 1805 John Hughes, Who was that year stationed at Liverpool Welsh Circuit, visited Llanidloes and other places on his way to Brecon, reporting a great revival of religion, which through the instrumentality of the ministers, Mr. Gartrell and Hugh Ransom, and the local preachers of the Welshpool Circuit, had spread all over the country from Llanidloes to Builth ‘The revival,’ says Mr. Hughes, ‘was different to those he

had seen in North Wales, there being no noise or sensationalism in connection with it. On his way he preached at Builth, at the house of Dr. Rice, who lived at Bwlch, and who became for many years a most devoted Methodist, and also at Llanidloes. The great want was Welsh preachers at Merthyr, Brecon, and the smaller places; this was the one request from Llanidloes which was pressed upon Mr. Hughes. Mr. Owen Davies and Mr. Bryan had visited that town during the previous autumn on their way to Aberystwyth; they were also convinced that there was a good opening for a Welsh preacher at Llanidloes. The following Conference Edward Jones (2nd) was appointed as a Welsh missionary on the Welshpool Circuit. Mr. Jones laboured chiefly in the neighbourhood of Llanidloes. He succeeded in forming Welsh Societies in seven places during the year. In 1806 Llangollen was made the head of a new Circuit, and included the whole country from Llandegle in Denbighshire to Llandovery in Carmarthenshire, and two ministers were appointed—Mr. John Maurice and John Davies. It was intended that they should work as far south as Llanidloes. Dr. Rice of Rhaiadr was so much impressed with the importance of taking a wider field of operation that he went to Denbigh himself to see Mr. Owen Davies, the general superintendent, and succeeded in persuading him to send Evan Parry and Evan Hughes during the year to work on the larger Circuit. During that year the preachers met at the beginning of the quarter, and agreed to the plan of their work, upon which they asked the divine blessing, each taking his appointed Circuit, hoping to meet his colleagues at the end of the quarter and to be able to report progress. They had on their plan Llanidloes, St. Harmon, Rhaiadr, Glangwy, Waen, Cae'n-y-fedw, Felin-y-wern, Caersws, Trefeglwys, Talerddig; Carno and Trefeglwys, Llandovery, Llangamerch, Tycwta, and Bwlch were also on the plan. In 1807 Llanidloes was made the head of a new Circuit, with John

Williams (1st) and John Rogers appointed as its ministers. The Society and chapel, which were previously included in the English Circuit, were now transferred to the Welsh, and the work went on steadily increasing. The chapel was soon enlarged and filled, and enlarged the second and third time. This state of things continued till 1816, when the Conference was compelled to withdraw a large number of ministers from the Welsh work, and appoint them to English Circuits. Llanidloes was for nine years included in the Newtown Circuit. Disappointment was inevitable. There was one minister less in the Circuit, and three years later a second minister was withdrawn. The reduction in the ministerial staff necessitated giving up several places, especially on the Welsh side of the Circuit. In 1823 and 1824 Conference for some reasons appointed two English ministers to labour on the Circuit. Whether the Conference intended to use such means with a view of making it a thorough-going English Circuit, or whether there were other circumstances that made the appointment of bi-lingual ministers impossible, we know not, but the result was as disastrous as it has been in other such instances. The Welsh people can be led, but to drive them is a moral impossibility. Methodism has suffered not unfrequently at the hands of well-meaning Englishmen—ministerial and lay—in consequence of the assumed superiority and dictatorial airs adopted by third or fourth rate men when they have come into Wales; the result of which has been that some good-intentioned Welsh Methodists have become estranged, and in some instances opposed to English Methodism. Llanidloes Methodism greatly suffered as the result of this policy. A few friends, finding that the cause was dwindling away, made an effort to secure the services of a lay agent to preach for them in the Welsh places in the Circuit; and they succeeded in securing the services of David Morgan, and after he entered the ministry of John L. Richards and Edmund Evans. In 1824 Llanidloes was again made

the head of a Circuit, and Lewis Jones was appointed minister of the Circuit. Mr. Jones found the congregations small ; the Circuit was wide, and had thirteen preaching-places. He, however, laboured hard and well. In 1826 the Circuit was fortunate in securing the services of Hugh Hughes. When Mr. Hughes entered the Circuit there were chapels at St. Harmon, built in 1807; Trefeglwys, in 1808; Rhaiadr, which was enlarged in 1809; Carno, in 1812; Newbridge, in 1813; and Caerau was nearly completed and was opened for divine worship that year. Mr. Hughes commenced preaching, and formed Societies in seven other places during the year. Llawryglyn, Pwllyrebol, Belan, Cefn, Shiloh, and probably Diarth near Llandrindod, and Llandinam. True, there had been a Society class at Llandinam many years prior to his appointment, but it was probably included in one of the Societies in the Newtown Circuit, as we can find no trace of its existence during the interval. Mr. Hughes was then at his best, a most devoted minister, in good health ; and he was appointed to labour among a people more ready to attend to and appreciate preaching than any Circuit the writer has known. Mr. Hughes's labours were almost superhuman. He would preach two and three times every day, and visit every farmhouse and cottage in the district, often also preaching to the people in their homes, while crowds followed him from place to place, filling the chapels in which he officiated. Mr. Hughes was an all-round Methodist preacher. Whatever were his natural tastes, inclination, liking, he felt that he had been sent by the Conference to devote all his time, talents, and being to build up and to extend Methodism in the Circuit to which he was appointed. He was equally successful in leading souls to Christ, in building chapels, and in raising money to pay off debts. The membership in the Circuit during his two years increased from 261 to 374. The Caerau Chapel was a success. The old smithy, which had been bought at Llangurig chiefly through the instrumentality

of Mr. Hamer, Delfarch, and had been used as a place of worship, gave place to a chapel which was comfortable and commodious, with a cottage and other requisites for a country chapel. During the second year of Mr. Hughes's ministry in this Circuit the bookroom, which had for some time been located at Llanfair-Caer-Einion, was removed to Llanidloes, and John Williams (2nd) was appointed editor.

Mr. John Williams, to whom we have frequently referred, and whose early death was a great loss to Methodism, during his stay at Llanidloes gave considerable time and attention to the history of Wesleyan Methodism in Wales, and published a series of very able and interesting articles in the *Eurgrawn*, extending over rather more than two years. That the series was not completed has been a great loss.

Llanidloes continued an important Methodist centre, from whence were sent forth the Wesleyan Methodist periodicals north, south, east, and west; but the bookroom was removed to Bangor in 1860, and has remained there ever since. The Llanidloes Circuit continued to prosper for many years, the friends securing the best preachers in the Welsh work. There were a number of intelligent, influential, and active laymen in this Circuit, who were able to hold their own wherever they were, and to give Methodism a good position. We have an instance of this in connection with the purchase of the old smithy and the adjoining cottage, which was converted into a place of worship at Llangurig. At the close of the business at the parish vestry which was held in the church, it was proposed that a Wesleyan place of worship should be provided; this was seconded and carried, and £20 was there and then subscribed towards the purchase of property. Mr. Hamer of Delfarch, with wisdom and promptness, and without a moment's loss of time, secured the property. This incident greatly annoyed a few of the bigoted Calvinists, who went so far as to try to prevent the Wesleyans having the property by offering a larger sum of money for it. The chagrin of

these narrow-minded Christians was further intensified when they found that they were too late. Dr. Rees, and his brother Edward Rees, father of the Rev. John Rees, also identified themselves with ‘the people called Methodists.’ There were in the Circuit, too, some notable local preachers, including John Jones of Carno, and after that of Dolwen; John Jones, Idrisyn; J. Hamer and Jarman, Cwmbellan. The first-named was the chief instrument in the building of the churches at Carno, Caerau, and Llandinam, as well as in giving time and service to all the places in the Circuit. The second wrote a commentary on the Bible largely based on Clark, Benson, and such other works. It has passed through several editions, and still competes for the premier position among Welsh commentaries. The life of Jarman of Cwmbellan, if all the incidents related by the old people throughout the Circuit, with his travels to and from his appointments over hills and through vales and rivers, with the marvellous deliverances, were recorded in a book, would read like a fairy tale, and hardly receive credence among present-day preachers. The second generation of preachers included men who rendered valuable services to Methodism. David Davies of Tycerig, who was led to give his heart to Christ under the preaching of Dr. Thomas Jones, for nearly half a century has given the whole of his time to evangelistic work, and has preached with marked acceptance almost as frequently as any minister. Captain Williams of Van did good service as a local preacher, and in late years assisted very largely in the building of new chapels through the Circuit. Richard Evans, who entered the ministry; John Davies, Nantygeifr; Edward Davies, Caerau; Richard Jones, Salem; Evan Thomas, Carno; John Evans, Thomas Manuel, and Thomas Ashton,—these were all good men and true. The second generation of leaders, too, were men of character. The names of Richard Brunt, D. Lewis, Thomas Wilkes, David Hamer, and Meredith Hamer, all at Llanidloes;

Hamer of Dolwen ; Wooley, Llandinam ; Edwards, Gyll ; and William Evans, Trefeglwys; Evans, Glyn; Lloyd, Llawryglyn; Hughes, Henfaes ; and John Jones, Llangurig, recall to mind men of influence in church life and social and public movements. Few Circuits have better plant than the Llanidloes Circuit has, with a number of good preachers and leaders, and a respectable hold on that part of the country.

Llanfyllin, John Bryan's native town, was first visited by him, August 29, 1801. He had been absent for nearly twenty years, and on this occasion had come to his home as a Wesleyan missionary, his appointment having just been confirmed by the Leeds Conference. He had come to Llanfyllin with a determination to preach the gospel, and he was well aware that no people in the Principality were more bitterly opposed to religion or more determined to annoy, ridicule, and persecute religionists than the men of his native town. He asked permission to preach in the Congregational and Calvinistic Methodist chapels ; both were declined. He then went to see a man who at one time was co'-prentice with him at the shop of a Mr. Jones in that town, but who was now a leading member of the Calvinistic Methodists, and told his old friend that both places of worship had been refused him, and that he was going to preach under the hall, and he further invited his friend to go with him. John Rogers was probably under an impression that Bryan had been carried away by some strange and dangerous doctrine, and that he had better keep a respectable distance ; so he declined. Mr. Bryan then went to the shop of his old master, and asked for the loan of the old step-ladder, which request was granted. The young Methodist preacher took up the step-ladder under his arm, his Bible in his hand, and alone marched off towards the hall. The inhabitants of the little town were watching his movements, and gazed at him as he proceeded, with mixed feelings of scornful inquisitiveness and bitter hatred. The hall was reached, the step-

ladder was fixed and ascended, but no one came near except a poor old woman, who used to run errands for his mother ; she did what she could—she stood by him. He gave out the well-known hymn, ‘ Newyddion braf a ddaeth in bro,’ etc. (‘ Glad tidings to our vale has come ’), and began to sing, and his penetrative voice was heard by many, but they would not or dare not approach him. The poor old lady said, ‘ God bless thee, Jacko bach ! God bless thee, Jacko bach !’ but Mr. Bryan sang the hymn with a heavy heart. His knowledge of the people of the town, his own past life, the cold irony of the surrounding circumstances at the time, all pressed upon him, but after singing he began to pray, and soon the heavens bowed down, the divine power was upon and around him. It reached the people who were standing at their doors, and Mr. Bryan conquered with God and with men. When he opened his eyes a large crowd stood before him, many greatly affected—among others, the Rev. Jenkin Lewis, an old Congregationalist minister in that town. The presence of this good old minister at first hampered him very considerably. He was nervous, lost his text, could not remember verse, chapter, nor even the book ; in his trouble he cried to God, and then decided to take up the passage upon which his eyes would fall. The passage was Rev. xxii. 12 : ‘ Behold, I come quickly ; and my reward is with me, to render to each man according as his work is.’ He was quickly carried away by his message, the people were melting under the divine influence, and preacher and people forgot all the toils and cares of life under this most marvellous manifestation of the Spirit.

Here we must pause for a moment to mention an incident which occurred in that town many years previously. The Rev. Jenkin Lewis was then the pastor of a few Congregationalists who were struggling in the midst of many difficulties to keep together. One night these good people were assembled together in a small cottage just outside the town for prayer, and while Mr. Lewis was on his knees and

in earnest prayer, the door was suddenly thrust open, and a man with a mask on his face seized the preacher by the hair of his head, dragged him out to the street, where several others were ready to receive him. They joined in the cruel play; a handful of his hair was taken off, and the good old man went to his grave with the scars of this persecution upon his head. When Mr. Bryan saw the good man before him as he opened his eyes, with the visible scars on his head, he was deeply affected. When he had firmly grasped the congregation, and was about to emphasise that each should have his reward according to his work, the preacher put his hand on the old veteran preacher's head, and said: 'Ah, Mr. Lewis, I envy you those scars; they are scars of honour, sir. There is now on your head, sir,' he added, 'the hand which gave the mask to the man, and received it back stained with your blood and covered with your hair. I crave your pardon, sir, and if the man is in this congregation who did that act, I entreat him in the name of God to confess his sin this moment.' Almost before the preacher had finished the sentence there was heard an agonising cry, 'I am the man; God forgive me!' Mr. Lewis, who felt grieved when he heard that his deacons had declined the use of the chapel for Mr. Bryan to preach in, was completely broken down under the first prayer, was carried away by the sermon, but he never anticipated that his sufferings would become so unexpectedly the crown of his rejoicing. The influence upon him was so overwhelming that he cried out, 'Spare me, Mr. Bryan! spare me, Mr. Bryan!' The preacher and congregation were all in tears. One rich lady, who was attracted by the size of the crowd and by the powerful words of the preacher, stood up while the preacher offered his last prayer, and blessed God before all the congregation, and said that He had forgiven all her sins, and had saved her soul; and this lady, who was soon afterwards married and settled in London, left a hundred pounds in her will towards paying off the debt

on the Llanfyllin Wesleyan Chapel. This was the first Wesleyan Methodist service held in the town or neighbourhood, and the success was so great that a wide door was opened out at once, a Society was shortly formed, and a good chapel erected ; and in 1809 it became the head of one of the most interesting and prosperous Circuits in North Wales. The house of a good man, Evan Evans by name, was the first meeting-place of the few disciples, and afterwards the house of Mrs. Elizabeth Jones of Pendref (Townhead). Mr. William Jones of Llanelidan was chiefly instrumental in the formation of the Society. The first company of disciples included Richard Williams, Edward Ellis, Mrs. Jones, Talwrn, and her two daughters. William Davies soon joined the little company, and in 1809 entered the ministry, and is known as the second of that name. John Bryan frequently visited the town and district, and Mr. Owen Davies and other preachers soon followed. The chapel in the Vale (Capel-y-ddol) was erected as early as 1802 ; Llangynog, in 1804 ; Meifod, in 1806 ; Llanwyddyn, in 1807 ; Llanfyllin, in 1809 ; and Llansantffraid, in 1810.

In 1809 Llanfyllin was made the head of a new Circuit, with Hugh Hughes as its first superintendent. The Society was very feeble, says Mr. Hughes. A Mr. Richard Williams of Dolgelly, a gentleman of means, used to come to preach for them at Llanfyllin, and he was successful in drawing the crowds to the Methodist chapel. Mr. Hughes's ability as a debater was frequently put to the test, and if not highly cultured, he proved himself an expert in scriptural knowledge, and was generally more than able to hold his own. On one occasion he was on his way to Llanfair, when he was overtaken by three Calvinist ministers and another returning from the great Association meeting. After entering into conversation and finding he was a Wesleyan, they made a bolt on the young man. The discussion was protracted, heated, and interesting. There was some man on foot following the

debaters, and on whichever side he was prior to the discussion, when they got to the village inn and put up their horses, this man started telling the villagers how the young man had actually conquered the four older men fairly and squarely out of the Bible. The incident was carried to every cottage and farmhouse, and many went out to see and hear Mr. Hughes for themselves. On another occasion when Mr. Hughes and Mr. Lloyd of Meifod were going together through heavy rain to preach at Llanfair and Meifod, they could not secure any place indoors in which to preach, and were determined to preach even in the rain ; but from the moment the hymn-book was opened till the close of the service, it ceased to rain at both places the same day. These incidents made a great impression upon the minds of the people generally, and many of the intelligent farmers began to follow after the persecuted Wesleyans.

The Society was steadily growing year after year in number and influence. In 1819 Mr. Edward Lloyd removed to Tyntwll, his services as a preacher, leader, and supporter of the cause there proving invaluable. Mr. John Jones, the carrier, and William Jones joined the staff of workers—men of exceptional ability and of great force of character. The chapel was enlarged and improved several times, and in 1840 a new chapel was opened for public worship. There were also chapels erected in other parts of the Circuit. In 1814 three chapels were built—Bwlch-y-cibau, Pont Robert, and Llanrhaiadr. In 1815 the Llanerfyl Chapel was erected ; in 1818, the Llanfair-Caer-Einion Chapel ; 1819, Penygarnedd ; 1820, Pontcadvan ; and in 1826, Gwaunynog. There were now fourteen chapels in the Circuit, which had become one of the best in North Wales, and many good people living in the town were connected with the Society. Sarah Jones, the House ; Anne Hughes ; Mr. Jones, the watchmaker, and his devoted daughters Amelia and Sarah ; Beti Rees ; Margaret Morris ; Mr. Jones, the hatter ; Evan Evans, Morris Davies, and Evan

Watkins, local preachers, all deserve honourable mention and a place with the first band of Wesleyan Methodists. The church at Llanfyllin has since had noble men and true in David Edwards, draper, Edward Jones, Edward Lloyd, Evan Evans, men who would have proved a source of strength to any church.

In 1838 the Circuit was divided, Llanfair becoming the head of the new Circuit. The first Society on that side of the Circuit was probably that of Meifod. Mr. Owen Davies and John Bryan, on their way to the south, were told by the landlady with whom they stayed the night, that the excise officer was a Wesleyan from South Wales, and had been for some time a member with the English. He was sent for, and was delighted to find that Wesleyan ministers had really come to the village. This good man secured a place for them to preach at a butcher's shop, the second house from the King's Head. Service was held next morning too. Mr. Griffith Hughes was probably the honoured instrument in the formation of the Society at Meifod, and the services were held in a small schoolroom. At the close of the service, Mr. Hughes said to Mr. Lloyd, 'the Shop,' 'I want to come to stay with you to-night.' Mr. Lloyd opened his house that night not only to the preachers, but to Christ. It became one of the most interesting religious homes in Wales; Mr. Lloyd identified himself with Methodism, became a class-leader, local preacher, and with his family a great power throughout that district. Other active members deserving mention were—Mr. Thomas Jones and his wife; Mr. Timothy Jehu, father of David Jehu, the African missionary; Hugh Morris, Redhouse; Charles Jones, cooper, and his daughter; Mrs. Rogers; Owen Jones, Garth; Edward Howell; Oliver, Cadwaladr; Mrs. Gittins, Pont Robert; and Richard Evans, who also was for many years the active class-leader of the Pont Robert Society.

Mr. Lloyd was the first leader at Meifod, the chapel at

which place was opened in 1807. In addition to those already named, Richard Foulkes and Richard Humphreys became trustees. Mr. Timothy Jehu was a great singer; his voice was powerful, penetrative, and sweet. There were others, too, who were efficient masters of the musical art, and the congregational singing at Meifod was made a great attraction and blessing. In 1822 the chapel was enlarged, not because the old one was filled, but Mr. Lloyd and a few others were convinced it was the best way to strengthen and build up the work. Their anticipations were fully realized. In 1833 it was found necessary to enlarge again by erecting galleries. The Meifod Society had now become influential and strong. John Lloyd was a burning and a shining light. In his early days he had been known as a pugilist with whom no one wished to enter into contest. After his conversion he was often seen with his Bible in hand taking his stand in fairs and market-places exalting the power of God to save to the uttermost. His record is one of untiring labour for Christ up to the time of his death in 1837, when he passed away in peace to be for ever with the Lord.

John Tudor, E. L. Tudor, John Jehu, Robert Morris, Richard Davies, Robert Jones, Evan Evans, Evan Griffith were all men of considerable energy, and in various positions served Methodism well. The members of Meifod were largely responsible for the formation of Methodist Societies at Pont Robert, Bwlch-y-cibau, and Salem, each of which has for many years possessed a very interesting village Society.

Llanfair-Caer-Einion was first visited by William Batten about the autumn of 1804. The wife of the good man who kept the Red Lion, in the absence of her husband granted permission to the Wesleyan preacher to preach in her house. Mr. Batten was about the King's business, and took up his stand as soon as possible, and began to explain the way of salvation; but before he had gone on many minutes the husband came home intoxicated, and began to make a noise,

and declare that his wife had no right to allow these men to come to his house. Fortunately Mr. Vaughan, Bryntirion, a gentleman of considerable influence in the neighbourhood, was present, and he pressed the publican to let them hear what the young man had to say, and at last he consented to do so. At the close of the service Mr. Vaughan said to the preacher, ‘Follow me; I will take care of you’; he led him to the Boot Inn, and told the family to take care of the young man, and he would pay all his expenses.

We have no mention of any other Methodist preachers visiting Llanfair till 1806, although it is more than probable that some of the pioneers were in this beautiful locality during the interval. In 1806 Jones, Bathafarn, preached at the house of a relative of Jones of Cwm-bychan-bach, who accompanied him from Machynlleth; and on the following Sunday Mr. Humphrey Jones, Penual, preached at Llanfair. In 1806, or early in 1807, John Maurice, a Boanerges, came to Llanfair, and preached near the church in a house, which was crowded out, people not only standing about the door but also in the churchyard—some of the latter having been to church. The vicar, who was also a magistrate, was annoyed at the sight, and he sent the constable to bring the preacher before him. The officer allowed Mr. Maurice to finish the service, then told him that he must go before the magistrate for preaching without authority. Mr. Lloyd was present, and said to the preacher, ‘I will go with you,’ but when the vicar saw Mr. Lloyd, Meifod, with the preacher, he lost his courage, withdrew the charges, and told the young Methodist not to preach during the hour service was held in the church. Shortly afterwards, Thomas Thomas went to live at Llanfair, prior to his entering the ministry, preaching whenever he had an opportunity. The Society, however, did not grow at Llanfair, hence an attempt was made in an adjoining village called Melin-y-ddol (the Mill in the Vale), about a mile from the town. Here Mr. T. Phillips from the village, and his

wife, Richard Owen, 'the Shop,' and his wife, identified themselves with the Wesleyans; Mrs. Owen had been a servant in Wesley's house in London, and was greatly attached to him. Thomas Humphreys became a member of Society, and was appointed the first class-leader. In 1808 a small chapel was erected in this village, which served for some years. Unpretentious though it seemed, it was the birthplace and home of many happy souls. Another attempt was made at Llanfair, the meetings held in the loft of the hall; this effort was followed with greater success. A Sunday school was established, and the work generally prospered. A site was procured from Mr. Vaughan, Bryntirion, and in 1819 a chapel was erected, which was opened January 5 and 6, 1820; the trustees being Samuel Jones, Evan Jones, John Dolby, John Jones, Evan Jones (2nd), David Thomas, Thomas Humphreys, John Barker, and John Jones (2nd). There were seven preachers who took part in the opening services, and they had a day of great blessing. William Batten was stationed there shortly after the opening of the chapel, and his labours were helpful in building up the work of God. The Book Concern was taken from Dolgelly to Llanfair, and the little town on the Vernwy became a most important Methodist centre.

In 1839 it was made the head of a new Circuit, with John L. Richards as superintendent. The following years were generally prosperous, and during the Rev. Richard Pritchard's superintendency a new chapel was erected, which was opened October 24 and 25, 1843. When John Jones, Ffinant, married Miss Vaughan of Bryntirion, and settled down at Llanfair in 1818, the Methodist Society received a new impetus, and from that day to the present the family has been a tower of strength to Wesleyan Methodism in that Circuit. Their son began to preach, and his natural gifts and eloquence took the country by storm, but death soon cut short the hopes of parents and friends. John Dolby and his family became useful members, and the eldest son a local

preacher. The Joneses of Tanllan, too, have long held a prominent place in connection with Methodism at Llanfair. Mr. Cadwaladr Humphreys, who married a daughter of Mr. Lloyd of Meifod, was for some years a most active and conscientious leader, up to the time of his early death in 1841. His two sons, John and Charles, have kept up the family history, and with their respective relatives and families still retain the old Methodist zeal and fidelity which characterized their ancestors. Evan Jones, the baker, and his wife, were most godly people. His eyes, under the preaching of the gospel, were like two springs. John Evans, the builder, was a faithful local preacher for years; Oliver Roberts and his wife, and Mrs. Dr. Jones, a sister of Mr. C. Humphreys, were all good and true Methodists. At Llanfair the old families hold on. A beautiful new chapel was erected on the old site, and a most intelligent and active Methodist Society is still found there, which more than holds its own. And while they can secure such men as J. V. Jones, John and Charles Humphreys, R. Jones, Evan Jones, and E. Evans, the faithful members will never be in need of leaders.

Llanrhaiadr was visited by Mr. Bryan in August 1801. The vicar of the parish, which is in Denbighshire, came to the bridge over the stream which divides that county from Montgomery, and not having any jurisdiction on the other side, he thought he could frighten the young Wesleyan preacher away. The vicar was a pugilist, there being only one man in the neighbourhood who could conquer him. This man appeared on the scene, and asked Mr. Bryan's permission to give the vicar a thrashing, from which, however, the despised Methodist preacher delivered the clergyman. John Maurice also preached near the Plough. Some of the old people contend that he was the first to visit the place, but of this no proof is forthcoming. The earliest date is that given by Mr. Bryan, though Robert Humphreys and William Jones probably visited the place at an early date. Services were

first held in a small schoolroom connected with the house of John Williams. The first Society was formed here, Mr. and Mrs. Jones, the Brithdir; W. Evans, Parc; Rowland Rees, Robert Owen, and Mrs. Meredith being amongst the first to identify themselves with the Methodist Society at Llanrhaiadr. For years there was truly a ‘little flock,’ and it was a great event when one new member was added to the fold. When Hugh Hughes was on the Circuit, he was determined to go outside of the old cut-and-dried plan, and so he visited and preached at farmhouses. At one near the Rhaiadr, the people came together in such numbers that the room was too small, so an old factory was taken, and finally purchased, during the superintendency of William Evans, and converted into a comfortable place of worship. In 1823 a son of the old proprietor came into the property by his father’s death, and not being favourably disposed towards Wesleyan Methodism, notwithstanding that his father had disposed of the old factory and the Methodists had used it for years, he made an attempt to take it from them. He locked the gate, but John Davies, the superintendent, led his people to the gate, which he broke down, and entering the old place of worship preached with great power. The Society was not interfered with after this, but continued to worship there for nearly a quarter of a century. In 1834 a great effort was made and a new chapel built, a large undertaking at the time. Unfortunately, the trustees did not take much interest in the work of God in the place, and a few of the faithful were greatly tried. David Rees and John Roberts, two good men, stood by it well as leaders, stewards, and Sunday-school workers. It was to these good men a source of constant pain to find the debt pressing so heavily upon them, and they made a heroic effort to remove it. Mrs. Evans, Pen-y-maes, had promised £50 to meet a similar sum to pay off £100. So they raised £40 and paid off £90. This incident infused new life into the church. Mr. H. Humphreys took charge of

a Society class, and his efficient services were made a blessing to the work of God at Llanrhaiadr. Just about the time he removed to Pengarnedd, Mr. Jones removed to Henfachau, and his great usefulness was soon felt. He soon became the most influential man in the district in local and county matters. In connection with education, as a magistrate, as a Sunday-school worker, class-leader, and Circuit steward, Mr. Jones was found earnestly striving in the interest of the work of God, and for the benefit of the people in the district. No wonder that the church became strong and influential. In 1860 it was made the head of a new Circuit, with two ministers, Evan Davies being its first superintendent. The work has steadily prospered at Llanrhaiadr, which is now one of the most interesting of the Welsh Methodist churches. There were other worthy class-leaders in the persons of J. Davies, D. Jones, William Morris, Evan Morris, whose names will long live in connection with Methodism in this Circuit.

Mr. John Hughes visited Llangynog soon after his appointment to the Welsh mission. John Bryan, too, soon proclaimed the old story of universal love at Llangynog. In 1802 John Maurice and William Davies visited some relatives, and preached with considerable success in the neighbourhood; while Robert Humphreys, Jones (Bathafarn), and others gave attention to this place. As early as 1804 a small chapel was built. Few were able to give money, but they found the materials and built the chapel, some working the stones; while Mr. John Roberts, one of the first to join the Society, undertook the hauling; Henry Davies gave the beams for the roof; John Lloyd, the slates; J. James, the wood for the pulpit and the seats; John Morris attended to the work; and a Mr. Edwards lent money, seven of the friends becoming responsible for its repayment. This marvellous chapel was opened for divine worship by Owen Davies, John Bryan, and Stephen Games, November 11, 1804. The day was inclement, but rich

in spiritual blessing, many of the good people feeling almost like Simeon, ready to 'depart in peace.' Thomas Hughes was the first leader, and John Owen worked well with the Sunday school till he left for America. Jane Humphreys was a pattern of fidelity and devotion ; she lived some miles away, and had a mountain to cross and a most difficult path, and withal great persecution at home, yet she contrived to be present at every means of grace. Richard Evans, Penywaith ; Anthony Hughes, Robert Hughes, Elizabeth Jones, Robert Jones, and Margaret Thomas, The Mill ; Jane Griffith, John Jones (Penygraig), and Evan Hughes were also active and useful in connection with the work of God at Llangynog. An attempt was made by the Mr. Edwards referred to, to hold the property as his own, and not succeeding in this effort, he tried to transfer it to the Congregationalists, but in all his attempts he failed. Mr. Lloyd, Tyntwll, stood by the friends, becoming responsible for the debt, and in other ways, equally to his honour, helping forward the work of Christ. In 1840 the chapel was enlarged, and great trouble was given by the contractor, but in this case Mr. Lloyd again fathered the cause, and the friends at Llangynog were brought out of their difficulties through his devotion to Methodism.

Pengarnedd was visited by William Batten about 1812. Edward Lloyd, Pengarneddfach, invited the preacher, whom he met at Llanrhaiadr, to his house, Edward Jones, Robert Jones, and others, who joined the company, travelling to and fro to the means of grace. In 1818 they formed a separate Society, Evan Pugh mainly taking charge of it. In 1820 Edward Jones became leader. The following year a new chapel was erected. Mr. Moreton and his family became a tower of strength, and Mr. H. Humphreys, Coronorion, proved a most powerful local preacher and a burning and shining light throughout that end of the county for many years. Many of these village Societies have sent out to various parts

of the country some strong men, who have done much for Methodism in other places.

Mr. Jones, Bathafarn, was probably the first Methodist preacher to visit Pontcadvan. He preached the first time in the smithy of a man by the name of Edward Davies, a Congregationalist, in 1806. The Wesleyans were persecuted in various ways. One made a song to ridicule them, yet, strange to say, his own son and daughter soon joined the Methodists. The preaching was carried on at farmhouses. After Evan Jones, Caethle, was converted, his house or workshop was used regularly. Mr. Isaac Ellis and his wife joined the few Wesleyans, and after that John Jones of Hendy, a young man full of zeal, who became largely instrumental in the erection of a chapel in 1824, but who some short time after emigrated to America. David Ellis became leader, and for some time Mr. Jones of Pentreゴ, whose class was after taken by John James. The last named was a man of great power in prayer, one who spent much time in secret communion with God. He was earnestly engaged in prayer somewhere near his house, when a neighbour passing heard his petitions, and was there and then led to give his heart to Christ. This man, whose name was John Edwards, was appointed leader of the class after John James's death, and his son held the position of leader for a considerable time after his decease. Thomas Morgan, Thomas Williams, and Richard Jones were men of sound principles, who led on the Society in its days of weakness and trial. Like other chapels in this part of the county, the debt caused considerable anxiety. The members, however, fought and conquered their difficulties, and helped Methodism into a fairly prosperous state. Mrs. Elizabeth Breeze, Miss Roberts of Cann Office, and Mrs. Davies of Rhandir belonged to the faithful and elect ladies who made for themselves a place in the history of the work in this Circuit.

There is some doubt as to who was the first Methodist

preacher to visit Llansantffraid. It is very probable that John Hughes, who was on the ground the year before the foundation of the Welsh mission, was the pioneer of Wesleyanism in this beautiful village. Owen Davies and John Bryan visited the locality at an early date. The vicar granted the use of the schoolroom, and Richard Humphreys, the schoolmaster and shopkeeper too, was favourable; and Mr. Whitfield, the landlord, who had removed to Liverpool, used his influence in their favour. They were not without their difficulties even here. The prejudice against the doctrines was deeprooted, and often pressed with more zeal than wisdom. Mr. Richard Foulkes, Tybrith, however, joined the Wesleyans, as did also the schoolmaster, Mr. Jones, Ffinant, and his wife, his sons John and David soon following. John became a local preacher, whose services throughout that part of the country were made a great blessing; he afterwards removed to Llanfair-Caer-Einion. David Jones was sent out as a missionary to the West Indies in 1817, but in the following year, after a few days of suffering, his work ceased on earth, and he entered into a higher service above. His sisters also identified themselves with the Society —one of them became the faithful wife of the Rev. John L. Richards; the other, the wife of J. Roberts, The Voel. Edward Jones, another brother, became a class-leader and local preacher; the younger members too, all the family being conspicuous for their attachment to the work of the church, and especially to the Methodist preachers. John Howells became a leader at Llansantffraid, and a Christian who manifested considerable beauty and strength of character; and Mrs. Evans of Glasgoed and Mrs. Morgan, Gelly, were considered Methodist women of great piety. The chapel erected in 1820 was enlarged in 1843, by the liberality of the friends. The lady last named, Thomas Tannatt, and William Tannatt assisted largely in paying off the debt.

When Jones (Bathafarn), resided at Machynlleth, he visited

Llanerfyl, and Humphrey Jones (Marchlyn), David Jones (Beddgeleret), and others soon followed him, preaching near the old smithy. Jones (Bathafarn), preached in the open air by moonlight on a Christmas night, and after the service invited those who wished to flee from the wrath to come to follow him to the house of Mr. Thomas Lewis. Nine or ten responded, and this was probably the beginning of the Methodist Society at Llanerfyl. Class meetings were held sometimes at Garth-Bibio, other times at Carn-y-Mynydd. Ultimately a class was founded at Llanerfyl, and Richard Mills was the leader. Thomas Lewis, too, was made a class-leader after some time. Two rooms in a cottage were used in which to hold the services, but much inconvenience was felt through the including of this Society with the Machynlleth Circuit. Richard Jones, a blind Baptist, was converted under the preaching of Edward Jones (3rd), who became one of the most notable characters in North Wales. Richard used to attend all the great preaching gatherings for miles away, and his responses were often most bewildering to the preachers, especially if they did not know him. When Hugh Hughes was at Llanfylln he took Llanerfyl under his charge, and worked hard to have a small chapel erected there. In this he was successful; the chapel was opened for divine worship April 3, 1811, and the Society gradually increased. Joseph Jones became a leader and Thomas Gittins a great helper in the work. In 1835 a new chapel was erected (much larger and more commodious than the original one), in the erection of which William James and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Davies, 'the Shop,' and Mr. Jones, Coedtalog, were conspicuous by their thoughtful generosity. Some of the old Methodist preachers found in this neighbourhood the most hospitable homes in the Principality.

We now turn to the work in Machynlleth. First let us glance at the derivation of the name. According to some of the best authorities, *mach* means a high ridge, a barrier,

a dam or embankment ; *lleth* or *llaith*, moist, humid ; literally the word would mean moistham, to give it an English name. Prior to the visits of the first Welsh Wesleyans to Machynlleth, Mr. Thomas Foulkes, who had been connected with the Society of Chester, and was known to Mr. Wesley, had resided there. Mr. Foulkes had been converted under the preaching of Wesley's preachers, and maintained his membership, and paid his contributions regularly to the Chester Society, towards which he left a sum of money in his will. Although he lived at Bala before he came to Machynlleth and was related through marriage to the celebrated Thomas Charles of that town, and worked with the Calvinistic Methodists, he never lost his love for, or severed his connection with, Wesley and his followers. He was probably instrumental in bringing out the rules of the Wesleyan Society in the Welsh language as early as 1761, and by these rules the Calvinistic Methodists governed their Societies for a time. It is thought, too, that he was the prime mover in bringing out the two sermons of Charles Wesley, Mr. Wesley's on Physic, and other small works. He had now been living at Machynlleth for fifteen years, carrying on business in that town, retaining his membership in connection with Wesleyan Methodism, and at the same time doing all he could to build up the Church of Christ among the Calvinistic section. In 1802 Owen Davies and John Hughes came to Machynlleth and went to see Mr. Foulkes, who gave them a very hearty welcome, and arranged that they were to preach in the Calvinistic Methodist chapel the next morning. At ten o'clock they repaired to the chapel. Mr. Davies preached in English on 'For me to live is Christ.' While Mr. Davies was preaching Mr. Foulkes was taken ill, and was obliged to leave the chapel and taken home ; after the second sermon was over the preachers returned to the house of Mr. Foulkes, whom they found in a precarious state ; Mr. Davies remarking, 'I hope I have not come to preach

your funeral sermon.' ‘This I know not,’ said Mr. Foulkes ; ‘but I do know that “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”’ The following Saturday he passed beyond the veil, to be ‘for ever with the Lord.’ There was great sorrow in the district, for he was a good man, who feared God, and did much in the interest of his fellow-men, and in all his dealings commended to others the religion which he exemplified in his long and useful life. His family were Calvinistic Methodists, and long held a prominent position in connection with that body ; but they always retained a warm place for Wesleyan Methodists in their inner heart, and frequently gave evidence of the good feelings which existed.

Mr. Jones (Bathafarn), and Parry (Llandegai), were probably the next Wesleyan preachers to visit this town. They preached under the old market hall. Their singing attracted attention and drew a crowd. The same year Mr. Jones came to Machynlleth again ; he was interfered with by one of the great landowners, who advised him to go and work in the harvest-field, which Mr. Jones quickly responded to by saying that harvesting was his work. He preached in a room used by the Baptists, and shortly after this visit fortnightly preaching was instituted here—an old barn in the Doll being taken in which to hold the services. Mr. Jones, Bathafarn, formed the Society, which met at the house of Mrs. Anne Pugh till the place became too small. The removal to Machynlleth of Mr. Robert Rees, who had been connected with the Wesleyans at Llanidloes, was a great advantage to the few friends here. He had been for some time a member of the English Society, was a young man of ability and zeal, and well fitted to take charge of the Society class. Up to the time of his death in 1830, he was a most active and useful Methodist, whose influence and good name were made a blessing to the Wesleyan Society in the town and neighbourhood. In January 1806 the first quarterly meeting was held at Machynlleth. It was not a mere business meeting in those days—the preaching

services were considered by far the most important. Many preachers came together, and the people journeyed from Cardiganshire, Merionethshire, and also from other places in the county. The first night the services were held in the old barn, William Davies (*Africa*), and Jones (*Bathafarn*), being the preachers. The next morning, at six o'clock, there was another service. At ten there was preaching in the open air near the house of John Lloyd. These services were seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. The weather was favourable, but it was a serious question as to what they should do in the evening. The day was short, and the weather became very threatening; they had no place to go to except the old barn, and there were crowds of people determined to hear the new gospel and to judge for themselves. The friends decided to pray for favourable weather, and take their stand in the open air; and prior to the holding of the service a few of the friends were engaged putting up ropes to hold the candles, while others were praying for clement weather. The service was held, the weather proved fine, the candles burned as naturally as on a fine summer evening, the preaching was accompanied by great power, and the service over, the friends were invited to a love-feast in the old barn. Then came a severe storm of wind and rain, which prevented many of the people going home that night. The members of the little Society had a most blessed love-feast, This meeting, at which Owen Davies, Robert Humphreys, John Williams (1st), Edward Jones (2nd), and W. Parry, Llandegai, in addition to those previously mentioned, were all present and took part, was made a great blessing. The impression on the neighbourhood was so favourable that many that day came out on the Lord's side, and the meeting was long referred to by the inhabitants generally as one of great power, and as an important historical event. The following Conference, Machynlleth was made the head of a new Circuit, Jones (*Bathafarn*), and William Davies (*Africa*),

being appointed the ministers. Mr. Jones said that he had met with great kindness at the hands of the people of Machynlleth. On his first visit, the families at the White Lion, the Boot, and the Spinners Arms offered him hospitality; and he further adds that Mr. Foulkes had said so many kind things about Mr. Wesley, that the people were largely prepared to receive his preachers with open arms. A Society had been formed at Tycerig the previous year. Mr. Jones of Cwm-bychan-Mawr had married the daughter of the Maes Mawr, Caersws, family, who were long connected with the Caersws Wesleyan Society, and when she came to live in the neighbourhood of Tycerig she was delighted to receive a Wesleyan preacher into her house. Mr. John Ellis of Cemmaes, who was then a Calvinistic Methodist, but who, with his wife, shortly afterwards joined the Wesleyans, invited the first preachers to his house. Pennal, Dinas Mawddwy, and other places were visited.

The appointment of Jones (Bathafarn), and Davies (Africa), was followed by satisfactory progress. The following summer a site was secured for a new chapel on a lease of ninety-nine years, at an annual rental of a guinea. The trustees were Mr. Jones (Bathafarn), Rees, Morris, Edward Rowlands, Richard Evans, John Pugh, Isaac Evans, Thomas Jones, Lewis Jones, Robert Rees, John Lloyd, John Jones; and the chapel was opened in August 1807, Owen Davies, Jones (Bathafarn), J. Bryan, John Williams, Hugh Carter, and W. Jones taking part in the opening services. The work prospered. The exodus from the old barn, where they had often experienced the divine presence and had seen many conversions, was not an unmixed joy, but they were glad to have a larger house in which to worship God and to which to invite others. The work in the new chapel continued to prosper, but not without difficulties. In 1808 a district meeting was held in this town; Owen Davies was the chairman, and his official sermon was one of great power. His appeals to his brethren were

most pointed and effective, and a deep and lasting impression was made. That meeting was memorable also as the one in which it was decided to bring out the *Eurgrawn*, the monthly magazine, which has held its own from that time up to the present, and by which the Wesleyans taught other denominations, as acknowledged by Dr. Rees, how to support good periodical literature.

For some years the Machynlleth Circuit included the area covered by the Dolgelly, Barmouth, and Portmadoc Circuits of to-day. When Hugh Hughes was in the Circuit in 1818–20 several chapels were erected. In the Machynlleth Circuit, Glasbwll, which had been opened in 1808, was greatly improved; Penegos and Eglwysfach chapels were built, and the debts considerably reduced on others. During the early years of the history of the Machynlleth Circuit many of the best Methodist preachers were stationed there,—John Williams (2nd), William Batten, Robert Humphreys, David Rogers, and other devoted men. David Rogers, who was the Chairman of the District during his stay in this Circuit, was for a time on the verge of eternity,—a comparatively young man, of great natural ability, a powerful preacher, and a most able defender of Methodism, and taking him all in all, probably one of the ablest men in the Welsh work. His medical adviser gave no hope of recovery, and his greatest struggle was to give up his work, which he did fully. To the surprise of all, Mr. Rogers soon began to improve in health, and was finally restored, his recovery being considered by the medical profession as almost a miracle. Mr. Rogers would in after years refer with tender and thankful feelings to those manifestations of the divine presence which he experienced when he was brought so near to God. The following year Mr. Rogers was removed to the English work, where he remained up to his death, which occurred at Darlington, January 1824.

From 1820 to 1831 Machynlleth was united to the Aberystwyth Circuit, the united Circuit being worked by

two ministers. The middle period in its history was not so successful as the first and last. In 1831 it was again made the head of a Circuit, and William Hughes became the superintendent. Mr. Hughes had been stationed on the Circuit ten years prior, and had passed through deep waters. At one time his wife and children were dangerously ill, two of his little ones were dead, and the neighbours were afraid to approach the house; but William Hughes attended to his duties at home and in the Circuit with such courage, fidelity, and Christian resignation, that it left a deep and lasting impression upon the minds of many outside his own Circuit. His return was hailed with great satisfaction by the people generally. He was followed by Dr. Jones, then known as a great preacher and an able theologian. During Lot Hughes's superintendency a new set of trustees was made, all the old ones having passed away with the exception of John Pugh, who had gone to live in another neighbourhood. Robert Rees, who had been so useful in connection with the formation of the Society, had rested from his labours; but his son, who afterwards entered our ministry, was taking an active part. Mr. Robert Rees and Richard Roberts entered the ministry in 1845. The latter was elected President of the Conference in 1885, is still one of our great preachers, and well known throughout the Connexion. Robert Rees, the father of the Rev. Robert Montgomery Rees, B.A., was one of our ablest preachers, and had his valuable life been spared to the Connexion but a few years longer his influence as a preacher would have been felt even more widely. These young men were attractive preachers, active workers, and withal loyal Methodists, and a new impetus was given to the work at Machynlleth. The Rev. William Evans, who was appointed to the Circuit in 1843, saw the chapel renovated, enlarged, and made comfortable and attractive. Mrs. Morris gave, according to the wish of her brother, £200 towards the expense, and the chapel was reopened for divine service in

October 1844. The Circuit was large, having twelve preaching-places and only one minister ; notwithstanding that there was a large membership, it was also receiving a grant from the contingent fund. This fact greatly pained the ministers appointed to the Circuit from time to time. Few stayed in the Circuit the full term. William Rowlands, when stationed there, being a most loyal and devoted Methodist, made great efforts, with the view of improving Methodism in the Circuit, and his efforts were not without some success. When the Rev. John Rees was on the Circuit he was determined to place the Circuit on a better footing, and faced the difficulties calmly but firmly. Many sent in their resignations, which were accepted ; Mr. Rees found suitable men to fill their places, and the work went on more satisfactorily, and what was especially cheering, most of those who left the Society returned and became more useful than ever. The superintendency of the Rev. John Lloyd was greatly blessed, especially in consolidating and strengthening the work in the Circuit. During the three years that the Rev. Owen Owen was on the Circuit it was blessed with a great revival, which commenced at Tre'rddol, only a few miles one side of the Machynlleth Circuit, and the benefits of which the Circuit shared very largely. James Jenkins had now settled down at Machynlleth. He had been for many years a most active class-leader and worker at Aberystwyth, was one of the most zealous temperance advocates we have ever known, most uncompromising with the liquor traffic, a loyal Methodist, a well-read man with considerable natural ability, fearless of all opposition, and resolute to stand by what he considered right, heedless of consequences. There were, too, in the Circuit other young men ready to be led on lines of usefulness, in addition to a host of older men, good and true, who had worked steadily if quietly for many years, but who were glad to fall in with others to improve the Circuit. Evan Williams had been connected with the Society at Machynlleth since they

had worshipped in the old barn, and for many years had been a faithful leader. John Hughes, the draper, too, was active and useful. John Evans of Ddolen ; David Jenkins, Caerhedyn ; Thomas Jones, Alltybladur ; John Ellis, Dderwenlas ; Evan Ellis, Pennal ; Thomas Peirce, Pandybach ; Lewis Evans, Cwmllinan ; the Edwardses, Abergwydol ; John Morris, Abercegir ; the Owenses of Corris ; the Pughs at Machynlleth, all rallied round the minister and Circuit. Soon they were able to sustain two ministers without grant, and a period of prosperity followed. New chapels were built at Corris in 1866 ; Penegos, 1868 ; Cwmllinau, 1871 ; Tycerig, 1868 ; Llanbrynmair, 1872 ; at Upper Corris, 1874, and Machynlleth, 1881 ; while all the other chapels were renovated, and the plant throughout the Circuit is now in a very satisfactory state. During the period Thomas Thomas (A) laboured in the Circuit he was most heartily and energetically supported by the Circuit stewards, Messrs. David Owen, then of Corris, now of London, and Edward Rees, and other able local preachers and class-leaders, and substantial work was done. For several years the Circuit has taken a leading position, and has been one of the most substantial and influential in the Welsh work. In 1881 the friends undertook a difficult task in the erection of a new chapel for Machynlleth. The site was a costly one, and two good dwelling-houses had to be taken down in order to bring the front of the chapel to the main street. The friends counted the cost carefully and wisely, and for some time before actually commencing building they laboured earnestly to accumulate funds. The chapel, which is large and substantially built, is most comfortable to worship in, pleasing to the eye, and altogether one of the best in the Principality. The old chapel is now converted into a school-room, classrooms, etc., and the property is practically free from debt. In connection with the building of the new chapel the services of many of the friends were invaluable, and their gifts reflect great credit upon their generosity.

The names of Edward Rees, Owen Pugh, Lewis Williams, Richard Ellis, Evan Humphreys, Robert Pugh, Adam Evans, son of the late Rev. William Evans, William Lewis, D. Davies Williams, William Pugh, and many others, whose names will be written above, made self-sacrificing efforts, which to them will be a joy for ever, of which the chapel will be a lasting monument. One good Methodist from Machynlleth, who had gone to Washington, remembered his native town during his life, and left them a legacy which was secured after a long and determined struggle, in aid of the funds of the new chapel. The town has now a splendid property, and, considering its size, a prosperous church, Sunday school, and congregation, and a number of intelligent leaders and families, which lead us to anticipate a bright future. For many years Machynlleth has had most effective congregational singing, which has certainly attracted young people, and often made a blessing to many souls. Mr. Hugh Lewis and David Ellis have long and well served the church with this branch of public worship.

When Stephen Games was appointed to Welshpool in 1803, Caersws was in his Circuit, and one of his homes was that of Mr. Lewis, and on one of his visits he met Mr. Jones, the son-in-law, who, finding that Mr. Games could preach in Welsh, invited him to preach at Cwm-bychan-Mawr, which invitation the preacher accepted. This was the first sermon preached by a Wesleyan in the neighbourhood of Tycerig. At the earnest request of Mrs. Jones, Cum, Mr. Jones of Bathafarn visited the place, and preached in the mill to a large congregation, and the next morning at Cwm-bychan, where the Society was formed, and the services held for some time. David Jones, Beddgelert, soon after settled down for a time in the neighbourhood, keeping a day-school in a room which belonged to Mr. Thomas Humphreys, father of the Rev. Thomas Jones Humphreys. Mr. David Jones, who in 1807 entered the ministry, was one of the most attractive preachers;

his voice was like a silver trumpet, and his influence over an audience was really marvellous. The Society formed included Mr. and Mrs. Jones, Cwm-bychan-Mawr ; Mr. and Mrs. Jones, Cwm-bychan-bach ; Morris Griffith, Cylliau ; Edward Jones, Cygidog ; Robert Jones, Mary Jones, and others. Mr. Jones, Cwm-bychan-Mawr, gave a site on lease, and in 1808 a chapel was built ; Robert Jones, Frongoch ; Mr. Griffith, E. Jones, G. Lewis, Tybach ; O. Owens, Penybont ; and R. Jones becoming trustees. The new chapel was opened for divine service, April 9, 1829, the first leaders being John Jones, son of Richard Jones, and Robert Jones, Frongoch. They were strengthened by the appointment of Griffith Lewis, R. Roberts, Penygraig, and William Roberts, Red Lion. The new chapel became the birthplace of many ; the Society was steady and thriving. In 1868 the need of a new chapel was felt, a freehold site was secured, and a good substantial chapel and house were built. The people had a heart to work, and by united effort they carried the scheme through successfully. While all laboured well, the time and attention of Edward Jones, Penygraig ; L. Lewis, Thomas Morgan, Groftt ; H. Jones, and the Humphreys deserve special mention. Robert Jones, Frongoch, was not only a most faithful class-leader, but he was one of the most notable local preachers in the Principality. In fidelity, courage, faith, endurance, and labour, he was as noted as Sammy Hick, but had a more comprehensive grip of the word of God. He lacked the smartness of the Yorkshireman, but he made up for it in depth. He was a rough but most precious diamond, and by his work and character attracted many to Christ.

There were three brothers, Thomas, William, and Edward Roberts, living at Brynymoel, useful, good men, but the three went out to America. Thomas Jones Humphreys, now one of the ablest men in the Welsh ministry, began to preach at Tycerig. Edward Jones, a very intelligent preacher and poet, hails from Tycerig ; and John Humphreys, who is also an able

minister in the Welsh work. This Society has been blessed with some true heroes in real life, who have crossed mountains and rivers, journeyed through storm and calm, summer and winter, week after week, for many years, long distances to class-meetings, prayer-meetings, and preaching services at Tyceirig. Mrs. Matthew Williams, who was so prominently connected with Liverpool Methodism, was one of the early converts from this Society, and others who have done good service elsewhere found Christ in this locality.

As early as 1809 John Maurice visited Abercegir, although it is probable that Jones (Bathafarn), Davies (Africa), and others had been preaching in the neighbourhood some time before. Mr. Maurice preached in various places in the locality, sometimes at Talywern and other places, including Abercegir. Mr. Robert Jones, Frongoch, who had been a class-leader at Tyceirig, was chiefly instrumental in the formation of the Society at Abercegir, and was the first member and leader. He was encouraged by seeing Owen Owen, Penybont; Rowland Roberts, Rhosdyrnog; John Jones, Pwlldu; Evan Evans, Nantywreisgyn; and shortly after Mrs. Jones, Cwmllwyi, and her son joining the little Methodist Society. The Cwmllwyi family was one of the most influential in the neighbourhood, hence the Society was greatly strengthened by their support. A small cottage in the village was taken, a pulpit was fitted up at one end of it, and a few benches provided, and here they worshipped God with all the beauty of true simplicity. The cottage with the adjoining land became the property of Mrs. Jones, Cwmllwyi, of whom Mr. Robert Jones purchased it for £17, and steps were taken for erecting a new chapel. The chapel was opened for divine worship in 1826, the trustees being Robert Jones, John Jones, H. Hughes, John Rowlands, Richard Rowlands, and Edward Parry. The debt on the chapel was allowed to remain for many years. At an anniversary service held in 1845 the Rev. David Evans (2nd), a native of Abercegir, was

the preacher ; a large number of the old neighbours had come to hear him, and he made a special appeal on behalf of the long-standing debt. The response was such that in a comparatively short time they were able to pay off the whole burden. In 1863 the chapel was enlarged, and again in 1886. It is now a most attractive and comfortable place of worship. The Society at Abercegir, which has been a very productive one, sending out to populous districts quite a number of young people, has also held its own through many changes. John Edwards, Abergwydol, and his sons Richard and Robert, and his daughter, have long been a source of strength to the cause. John Morris, a most intelligent, faithful, devoted leader, superintendent, and teacher, and a man of considerable literary ability in the vernacular ; Hugh Hughes and his family, Thomas Williams and Edward Williams, David Jones, Robert and John Roberts, Elizabeth and Edward Parry ; Thomas Evans was a good class-leader, and John Jones, Cwmllywi,—all have held a prominent place as Methodists in the locality, and were widely known in the county—some of them far beyond its pale—as devoted, stalwart, and useful Wesleyans. David Evans and Henry Parry entered the ministry ; the former, a very able preacher and editor of the Methodist periodicals, died when a young man ; the latter has travelled in most of the important Circuits in Wales, and is known also as editor of the periodicals and author of several well-written and interesting books.

The old Society which was begun at Cemmaes is now at Cwmllunau, where, largely through the exertions of Lewis Evans, T. Edwards, and the Circuit ministers, a beautiful chapel was erected in 1871, which has given a new position to the Methodist Society in that locality. The chapel at Llanbrynmair, opened in 1872, owes much to the labours of John Roberts, Hugh Williams, and Mrs. Griffiths ; the former and the latter have since passed away to their reward.

Blaenypant Society was first formed in a small cottage.

The chapel was built in 1841, largely through the instrumentality of Dr. Thomas Jones, who was then superintendent of the Circuit; Hugh Hughes, Rhiwgam, brother of the Rev. Thomas Hughes, who died in 1846, being the first leader. After Hugh Hughes emigrated to America, Hugh Jones, who lived in the chapel-house, became the leader, and later Rowland Edwards, Penybank. Thomas Peirce of Pandybach, notwithstanding the long distance he worked and lived from the chapel, proved a loyal Methodist and a most successful class-leader. He had a large family of children, all of whom he brought regularly to Sunday and week-night services. His children and neighbours and all who knew him call him blessed.

Derwenlas Chapel, built in 1858, has been the home of good Christians, and the birthplace of others. The old leader, John Ellis, was one of the most upright, consistent, and hospitable in the Circuit, a man of sterling worth. His family, John Griffiths, and others, bare a good record. Glas-bwll Chapel, a plain building in a most romantic and isolated locality, has had some Christians whose characters were more solid than its rocks, more durable than its mountains, and more beautiful than its cataracts. Thomas Jones, Alty-bladir, the leader of this Society, will ever live in the minds of those who knew him. The county of Montgomery is thinly populated, and cannot boast of one populous town or district; but it has seven Circuits, over eighty Wesleyan chapels, a number of influential and active families, a band of able local preachers, and a good staff of workers. It has produced a number of noted local preachers, and it has supplied the Wesleyan ministry, Welsh and English, with a band of worthy and eminent men. In the list of those who have died we find the names of Thomas Olivers, the author of the well-known hymn, ‘The God of Abraham praise,’ a defender of Wesleyan doctrine, whom Mr. Wesley considered a match for Toplady; John Bryan, a man of considerable

genius, who had also the courage and determination of John Nelson; David Jones, Ffinant, and David Jehu both gave their lives to mission work, and died on the field; Robert Jones (2nd), Evan Hughes, William Davies (2nd) were faithful companions of Jones (Bathafarn) and Bryan, and did good work in connection with the establishment of Wesleyanism in various parts of the Principality; while John Lloyd, John Rees, Richard Evans, Thomas Hughes, David Evans (2nd), Henry Parry, and Robert Jones (c) served Methodism faithfully and well. Thomas Hughes, a man of considerable ability, the author of several books, *The Human Will*, *The Ideal Theory*, *The Divine and Human*, etc., would have made a greater impression upon the Methodist Church if he had not taken an unfortunate position in connection with the class meetings. Richard Roberts, Robert Rees, Ishmael Jones were drafted off to the English work, each reaching a distinguished position. More recently, E. Ashton Jones, Edward Lloyd Jones, J. H. Hopkins, Thomas Evans, J. J. Brown, all came from the county of Montgomery. And in the Welsh work, Richard Morgan (A), T. J. Humphreys, Edward Humphreys, John Cadvan Davies (the crowned bard), and John Humphreys rejoice in being natives of this good old shire. Charles le Feaux and William Cowell Brown gave great promise of long and efficient service, but were cut down by the reaper Death.

Others have been sowing whose struggles, sufferings, tears are unrecorded, unremembered; but these struggles, sufferings, and tears have helped to build up the temple of God, and by and by they will be seen in the full light of heaven, where

‘ Immortal fragrance fills the circuit wide
That tells us whence these treasures were supplied.’

CHAPTER XVI.

CARDIGANSHIRE.

Ceredigion—Rowlands, Llangeitho—Wesley at Pontrhydfendigaid—At Cardigan—Jones, Bathafarn—At Aberystwyth—Owen Davies—Bryan—Great Meeting at Lampeter—Aberystwyth Society formed—Persecution—Prosperity—Circuit formed—Jones, Bathafarn, appointed—District Meeting—The Power from on High—Leading Members—The Band Meeting—Dr. William Davies—Thomas Jones (3rd) and Tre'rddol—Humphrey Jones—The Decision to Sell the Old Chapel—The Servant Girl—Development of the Society—Great Revival—New Chapel—Borth—The Old Leaders—John Herbert—Eglwysfach—John Owen—Evans, the Ddolen—Hugh Morgan, Tyhir—Ystumtuen—Isaac Jenkins—Ebenezer Morgan—Horeb—Bethel—Pontrhydygroes—Mynyddbach—John Hopkins—Lampeter—Capel Vicer—Cilcenin—Llandysul—Abereinon—Newcastle—Cardigan—Llangybi—Preachers in the County.

CARDIGAN is probably a corruption of *Ceredigion*, the original name, which was so called after *Ceredig*, the son of Cunedda Wledig, who became its king about the end of the fourth century. It is also called Aberteifi, signifying the junction of the River Teifi, from the situation of its capital at the estuary of the river of that name. This county includes the scene of Rowlands of Llangeitho's labours. As early as 1735 he was converted under a sermon preached by Jones of Llanddowror at Llanddewi-Brefi, and a mighty change in his preaching immediately followed. For some years he had denounced sin, and thundered the threatenings of Sinai with marvellous effect. His father and brother were also clergymen, living by the ministry without realizing the power of the gospel which they preached to others. He now felt the pangs of guilt, the frown of God clothed in the blackness of

thunder, and it made a great impression upon him. The great bursts of feeling to which the preacher was subject told intensely upon his hearers. Sometimes he would be bathed in tears as he delivered his message, and the congregation so melted that in the large crowd not a dry eye could be found. As early as 1737, Rowlands was immensely popular throughout the county, and was the leader of a great work of grace. Cardigan was and is a Welsh county ; few of the inhabitants speak English. Rowlands was a great Welsh preacher, and, unlike Wesley and Whitefield, he continued up to the time of his death to reside at Llangeitho. The itinerary had no charm for him ; he rarely ever left his own pulpit ; but he succeeded in making Llangeitho the great religious centre of the Principality. From Cardiff in the extreme south to Holyhead in the extreme north, the people travelled on foot to attend the services of the great evangelist in Cardiganshire. The Church of England was practically dead. There were a few Nonconformist churches, several of which had then become Unitarian—a body which proportionately is stronger in this than any other county in Wales.

Rowlands, Llangeitho, was what we should describe to-day as a high Calvinist, and his followers were Calvinists, many of them Antinomians. It is probable that the reason why Mr. Wesley gave but little attention to this county is found in the fact that the ground was worked so well by Rowlands, and also that preaching was required in the vernacular. He, however, passed through and preached in the county, but made no attempt at establishing Wesleyan Methodism within its borders.

Mr. Wesley's first experience in the county was not reassuring. He had travelled from Shrewsbury to Llanidloes, where he preached in the market house, and then he proceeded to Fountainhead. After losing his way, being wrongly directed, he came late, tired, and disappointed to Rhos Fair, near Pontrhydfendigaid (Blissford.) Here no hay could be

got for their horses, and while Mr. Wesley and his companion were in bed their beasts were taken out and shockingly treated ; Mr. Wesley's mare 'was bleeding like a pig from a wound two inches deep, made it seemed by a stroke with the pitchfork.' Mr. Wesley was greatly perplexed, but in his anxiety he remembered that there was a Mr. Nathaniel Williams for whom he had a letter, whom upon inquiry he found to live but a mile off. 'We walked thither,' writes Mr. Wesley, 'and found an Israelite indeed, who gladly received both man and beast.' After a little rest Mr. Wesley preached, when a member of the family was converted. Mr. Williams sent his servant with the preacher as far as Tregaron, and he proceeded through Lampeter to Carmarthen. On Monday, August 1, 1768, Mr. Wesley came to the abbey, Cardiganshire, where he spent the night, preaching in the house probably that evening, and again the next morning. On Thursday, August 10, 1769, he preached at the abbey again. On Tuesday, July 15, 1777, accompanied by Mr. Bowen of Llwyngwair, the founder of Methodism visited Cardigan town, which he says was continually growing in buildings and population. He preached at noon to a numerous congregation, including five or six clergymen, who, he says, were 'very attentive and deeply affected.' Mr. Wesley was favourably impressed with the town and people, and thought there was a favourable opening for Methodist preaching. No attempt was made to form a Wesleyan Methodist Society in Cardiganshire during Mr. Wesley's life. In 1804, on the 2nd of November, Jones (Bathafarn), and William Parry of Llandegai came to Aberystwyth, secured the long room of the Talbot Inn, and preached to a crowd of people. During the service, Owen Davies and John Bryan reached the town and soon stood by their brethren. The next morning the crier was sent through the town informing the inhabitants that two Wesleyan preachers were going to conduct a service in the Talbot Inn yard that morning. Crowds flocked to hear them, so they decided to

stay there the whole of the day, and conducted services again in the afternoon and evening. The day was a great success, —a great meeting to begin with. Mr. Jacob Jones of the Talbot provided the room, as well as the keep of the horses, free of charge, thanked the Methodist preachers for coming, and pressed them to come again. This was a successful beginning ; the preachers were encouraged by many signs of the approval of God and men. No Wesleyan preacher visited Aberystwyth again before the summer of 1805, when Mr. Jones (Bathafarn), preached in the same place as he had done before. On this occasion he informed his hearers that in the future he intended visiting the town every fortnight. The long room of the Talbot was the meeting-place for some time ; afterwards they worshipped in the large parlour of the Nag's Head in Bridge Street, which was kindly granted for their use by Mr. Davies ; but this room became too small, and they occupied an old storehouse on the other side of the river known as Trefechan (Littletown). It was in this place the first Society was formed by Mr. Jones (Bathafarn), the first members including Lewis Pugh, Robert Griffith and his wife, Mrs. Scantrad, William and Katherine Jones, Captain W. Jones, 'Sincerity,' and his wife, and Elizabeth Evans. The class was held in the Nag's Head, and Mr. Davies became a zealous Methodist. The storehouse was not considered satisfactory, and the old Boat House was taken and made as like a chapel as possible. This was more convenient, because they were able to have the use of it for their week-night and other services. This arrangement was not well-pleasing to the members of the other churches in the town. The Wesleyans soon found that they were considered dangerous heretics by their neighbours ; they were despised, spoken against, and their settling in the town was said to be the appearance of one of the last plagues. Sometimes most disgraceful papers would be fastened to the door of the Boat House, such as 'This is the synagogue of Satan !!!' Stones

would be thrown on the roof in order to frighten and disturb the worshippers, and later on even most painful forms of persecution were adopted. The discussions on the five points followed and caused considerable agitation in the town. In 1806 the Wesleyans procured a convenient site in the centre of the town upon which to build a new chapel. The new sanctuary was opened for divine worship in 1807; the same year the town of Aberystwyth was made the head of a new Circuit. There were three ministers appointed to labour there, Jones of Bathafarn being the superintendent. The Circuit included the whole of the county of Cardigan. The prosperity was most marked. The superintendent, writing to Dr. Coke under date of November 5, 1807, says: 'We added above a hundred members last quarter, and are likely to add more this. I hope, too, that we shall be able to establish new Societies in several places. We preach in most parts of Cardiganshire, and in several places in the county of Carmarthen.' Mr. Jones had succeeded in securing a fourth minister on the Circuit since the Conference, which had strengthened his hands very much. 'We have been and still are,' he writes, 'labouring under many disadvantages, having to preach very often in the open air because of the largeness of our congregations. Nevertheless we have a blessed prospect before us of a great revival.' The quarterly meeting, which was held at Lampeter, a small town near the centre of the county, was a great success. The Rev. Owen Davies, who was present at the meeting, writing to Dr. Coke said that a stage was erected in a field, and on the first night the Methodist preachers proclaimed a free, full, and present salvation to 'a large congregation by candlelight; the next day we preached to the largest congregations I ever preached to, except one on Gwennap Green, in Cornwall. The people came from almost every part of the county, and from parts of Carmarthenshire. Some of the neighbouring clergy and dissenting ministers, together with a number of very respect-

able gentlemen, were present, and dined with us and showed us evident marks of good-will.' It was when stationed at Aberystwyth that Jones (Bathafarn) penetrated into the adjoining county, and even as far as the borders of Glamorgan. A Society was formed and a large congregation gathered at Cardigan, Lampeter, and several other places in Cardiganshire during the year 1807. The first quarter in 1808, the increase of members in the Aberystwyth Circuit was over 200, and preparations for the erection of ten or twelve chapels were being pressed forward. The Rev. Josiah Hill, who was then stationed on the Merthyr Tydfil English Circuit, writing to Dr. Adam Clarke, January 12, 1808, said : 'I cannot express to you the pleasure I feel in witnessing the good that has been done in my own neighbourhood. The work fully attests its Divine Author; characters most notoriously wicked have been completely changed; sinners are converted to God. Those who a few months ago were living in ignorance and abandoned to the grossest vices, are now learning the lessons of wisdom, and are endeavouring to perfect holiness in the fear of God. I have never before seen so good a work; it strongly reminds me of the accounts we have of Primitive Methodism, and I might add of Primitive Christianity.'

The membership of the Aberystwyth Circuit in 1808 reached 900. Few Circuits in Methodism reported more satisfactory results. The following year Lampeter, Llandilo, and Carmarthen were each made the head of a new Circuit, and the increase of members on the year was nearly 400. The Borth Chapel was erected in 1806. In 1809 a chapel was built at Tre'rddol and Llangwyryfon; the Llandysul Chapel in the previous year; Pontrhydygroes, in 1810; Mynyddbach, in 1813; Ystumtuen, in 1822. These Circuits continued to improve up to the year of Dr. Coke's death, after which, in addition to the withdrawal of a comparatively large number of ministers, necessitating the giving up of many promising Societies, an element of uncertainty in the ad-

ministration contributed largely to destroy the confidence of the people. In 1812 there were three Circuits in the county, viz., Aberystwyth, Lampeter, and Cardigan. In 1813 Lampeter was merged into the Cardigan Circuit. In 1814 Lampeter was made the head of a Circuit again, while in 1815 it was included in that of Cardigan. This policy of change was most disastrous, and it is painful to watch the results in the large decreases reported for several years. The fact that the Welsh ministers were obliged to depend largely on Connexional funds, that in the death of Dr. Coke they had lost the strong hand and will of a Joseph who in the Conference had stood by them, that those who influenced the Conference had not given the same attention to or sympathised so deeply with them, will probably account for this lack of stability of administration. The most attractive and successful preachers were transferred to the English work. The Conference of necessity had to take over those men who could preach in the English language. The loss of such men as Jones (Bathafarn), David Rogers, Owen Rees, and others was undoubtedly a calamity at such a time. In 1819 the Aberystwyth Circuit had only one minister, many promising Societies were given up, such as those that were established at Talybont, Lledrod, Talysarn, and other places. In 1822 Machynlleth Circuit was amalgamated with that of Aberystwyth. The Society at Aberystwyth, having several good families, godly leaders, and devoted workers, retained its position and influence in the town and Connexion. Being a central and an attractive town, the District meetings were frequently held there, and many were attended with great success. The old people used to refer to one in 1810 at which the power was so overwhelming that when Owen Davies gave out a hymn, the preacher and the large congregation could not sing, all were melted to tears and stood in awe in the immediate presence of God. As the result of that meeting a great wave of revival spread all over the neighbourhood. References are often made to a sermon

preached on one of those great occasions by Robert Roberts and another by David Rogers, in each instance the result being a widespread work of grace. In 1842 the labours of the ministers on the Circuit were greatly blessed, and it was found necessary to enlarge the chapel. This was accomplished, and in the October of that year the Queen Street Chapel was opened for divine worship, Hugh Hughes, Richard Bonner, W. Rowlands, David Evans (2nd), Thomas Jones (3rd), and John Owen (Gyffin), all taking part; Griffith Hughes and Thomas Jones (3rd), both able and attractive preachers, being the ministers of the Circuit. Thomas Jones's life was soon cut short, but during his three years in the Aberystwyth Circuit he not only attracted large congregations, but his preaching was so specially owned of God that conversions followed almost every service. The Circuit, filled with the new wine of the Spirit, pressed onward and upward financially and spiritually. With this revival a group of new men were brought into active life in the church. Lewis Pugh, Richard Richards, James Jenkins, W. Stephens, Jones, Humphreys, and others had remained faithful and active many years; and they were now supported by a band of younger men, full of zeal and determined to do good. Mr. John Morgan, whose grandfather had been the honoured instrument in bringing the Methodist preachers to the eastern side of the county, and in whose house the first Society was formed, a young man of great musical talent, whose beautiful character was as undoubted as his genius, had just settled in business in the town. David Herbert, the watchmaker; David Lloyd, the draper; David Humphreys; William Davies, who became the eminent author, editor, preacher; Dr. Davies, to whom Methodism is greatly indebted,—all these good men met in band with their ministers, and they were made a great blessing to the work of God in the town and Circuit.

In 1844 it was found necessary to form a Society in the town for the English-speaking population; a small chapel in

Lewis's Terrace was dedicated for divine worship by the Rev. Hugh Carter, who had been many years in the English work. Mr. Collins and one or two others, who had long been connected with the Welsh Society, were delegated to take charge of the new Society. In 1868, after a great struggle to conquer their difficulties, a new chapel was erected in Queen's Road, which, through the efforts of the Rev. David Thomas, Mr. Rowse, and others, gave the English Society a new position in the town, the chapel being commodious, comfortable, and attractive. In 1865 Aberystwyth was made the head of an English Circuit. The good men at Queen Street feeling that it was their privilege to form a branch school for the very poor who lived in Moor Street, a small cottage was taken and a number of poor children and their parents were brought in. In 1869 it was found necessary to erect a chapel to meet the requirements of this locality, and in connection with this chapel the late Rev. Evan Richards and Mr. David Lloyd rendered valuable services to Methodism. The old chapel in Queen Street, which had been the birthplace of so many, was looked upon as old-fashioned, dingy, and unworthy of the Methodism of the town, and it was decided to build a new chapel. A costly site was secured in a prominent place, the plans were prepared, tenders accepted, and the erection commenced. The friends were rather precipitate in their action, and as the result they found themselves crushed with a heavy debt. The indiscretion, and the unfortunate circumstance in connection with the builder, the several deaths among the best families, and a series of painful contingencies, delayed the completion of the scheme for a time. The chapel was finally opened, but the debt was more than the trustees could carry. For some years they were sinking, the District meeting was compelled to take the case in hand, a committee was appointed, and presided over by the chairman of the District, and a great effort was made followed with success. The Rev. William Morgan, who was

appointed the superintendent of the Circuit, worked with so much energy and devotion that he succeeded in reducing the debt to less than half. The trustees have now a beautiful chapel, and are doing well. Few churches in the Principality can produce such a record of good work as that of Aberystwyth. Few churches have been blessed with such a succession of intelligent, godly, and influential leaders, and few churches have sent out such a bright succession of powerful preachers. Notable among these is the Rev. William Davies, D.D., one of the ablest ministers who ever entered the Welsh ministry, preacher, author, administrator, theologian, poet, statesman. John Richards, a most pathetic preacher, John Hugh Morgan, Ebenezer Morgan, Richard Evans, were all brought up in the Aberystwyth Sunday school. The names of Lewis Pugh, James Jenkins, William Stephens, J. Richards, John Morgan, David Lloyd, David Herbert, D. Wolseley (a near relative of Lord Wolseley), John Williams, will also long live in the town, and a few of them will be honoured by future generations. Many other families will be present before the mind of ministers and people. The Humphreys, Jones's Terrace ; Graig, Goch ; 'Sincerity,' Laura Place ; Conovian, and Great Dark Gate Street!! The Messrs. Collins, Hopkins, Evans, Thomas, furnished delightful Methodist homes, with families who believed in taking their children to the early prayer-meetings and class-meetings, as well as to family prayer. The present generation has a goodly heritage and a noble example of devotion in their ancestors.

When Jones (Bathafarn), and Parry of Llandegai were on their first visit through the counties of Merioneth, Montgomery, and Cardigan in October 1804, they came to Machynlleth, where they preached to a large crowd. Mr. Hugh Rowlands of Tre'rddol, a small village half-way between that town and Aberystwyth, was in the town on business, and hearing that two preachers representing the new sect were there, was moved out of curiosity to go and hear them preach.

The service was made a blessing to him, and at the close of the service he went up and invited the ministers to Tre'rddol. They were on their way to Aberystwyth, and gladly accepted the invitation, meeting with a hearty reception at Tre'rddol, having a good company to hear them preach as they took their stand by an old barn near the bridge. Mr. John Maurice visited Tre'rddol shortly after, and his preaching created terror in the minds of many who heard him, and they cried for mercy, and many found Christ. They followed the preacher to Talybont, at which place the service was held under the shadow of a big tree near the old house of John the smith (Shon-y-gof). Here Humphrey Jones, Ynys-y-Capel, was brought to give his heart to Christ. William Madyn, Tanygraig; William Arter, Borth; David Francis, Tre'rddol; Lewis Hughes, and others, also identified themselves with 'the people called Methodists.' A Society was formed at Tre'rddol, which met at the house of Thomas Pierce. The first class-leaders were Humphrey Jones and Lewis Hughes. Mr. W. C. Gilbertson, the gentleman who owned a good deal of the land in and about the village, and then resided at Dolcletwr, had been connected with the Methodists in England, and, when approached, granted a site on a lease of fifty years at ten shillings a year upon which to build a chapel. In addition to those above named, Richard Rowlands, Henafon; John Williams, Llwynglasbach; and Morris Evans, Ynysfach, became trustees. The chapel was erected and opened for divine worship in 1809. For a time the work prospered, but years of feebleness followed. David Francis, who was the leader, trading in a small boat between the village and Aberdovey, was drowned, and many in the neighbourhood believed it was an indication of the divine displeasure on the Wesleyans, and they openly said so, and the few Wesleyans lost heart. A servant girl who had given her heart to Christ removed to the neighbourhood, and identified herself with the few Wesleyans. At that time the

few old people who had held on for years without much success had agreed among themselves to sell the little chapel and give up the Society and join other denominations. The servant girl was so troubled about the thought of giving up the cause, that she addressed the few old people in such burning words that they decided to go on again. There was a young man living in the village of Taliesin, who was working with a hatter in the neighbourhood. The hatter believed the Wesleyan doctrines, and was called upon continually to defend his doctrines, which he did with zeal and ability. This young man frequently heard these discussions, and although a Calvinist himself, saw a great deal of force in the arguments in support of Arminianism, and occasionally went to hear the Wesleyan preachers; finally, notwithstanding his father's threat to turn him out of his home if he had anything to do with the new sect, he decided to cast his lot among the feeble persecuted Wesleyans. Mr. James Jones, a native of Tre'rddol, who afterwards entered the ministry on his return from North Wales to his native place, devoted his energies with great zeal to the cause of God in the village. William Thomas had a large family, and his sons and daughters were growing up young men and women; James Jones, Goetrefach, too, had a large family of young people; and Evan Evans, who for some time had been identified with the small Society, all took heart, worked together, and soon found their diligent efforts crowned with success. The little chapel was filled to overflowing. Humphrey Jones, who was the first to join the Wesleyans in the neighbourhood, had a son who entered the ministry, and had attained an honourable place among his brethren in the Welsh work, accepted an invitation to take the superintendency of the Aberystwyth Circuit, and was able to assist his old companions in building a new chapel. The superintendent of the Circuit, being also landowner, sold for £10 a freehold site upon which to build a chapel and form a burying-ground.

The chapel was erected and opened for divine worship on the 1st of May 1845, the preachers being Dr. Jones, Robert Jones (A), John Jones, Llanwyddyn, and David Davies, Llangurig. In addition to those mentioned above, Hugh Jones, Thomas Jones, William Jones, David Morgan, and Evan Jones, Llanerch, became trustees. The devoted, zealous servant girl previously referred to became the wife of the young man who had, contrary and in opposition to his own family and friends, and in face of their threatenings, cast his lot with the few Wesleyans. Thomas Jones, the post office, whose name will go down to future generations, and his faithful Sarah, also worked hard and consistently with that Society, and before their triumphant death they had the pleasure of seeing the fourth new chapel at Tre'rddol, and a prosperous Society, Sunday school, and a large congregation with a minister stationed there, while all their own children were actively engaged in the work of the Lord. In 1858 Tre'rddol was the centre of the great revival which spread throughout the county and the Principality, when over fifty thousand identified themselves with the various denominations.

Mr. Humphrey Jones, a near relative of the first Wesleyan at Tre'rddol, to which we have referred, returned from America, where he had been for some years in connection with the Methodist Episcopal Church, and at the earnest request of the Tre'rddol friends conducted a series of services. These services took such a hold of the people, that for five weeks in the middle of the corn harvest at five o'clock in the morning the chapel was crowded. The whole neighbourhood re-echoed with prayer. The hills resounded with praise. There were a few in the neighbourhood who seemed determined to brave the influence by not going near the services; but several of these were converted by hearing others pray and sing in the fields and plantations around the village. The preacher went to Ystumtuen, Aberystwyth, and other

places, and the wave of revival spread all over Wales, and marvellous results followed.

In 1872 a site was secured, and the following year the friends at Tre'rddol undertook the task of building a new chapel, which is one of the most attractive and comfortable in the Principality. The church is strong and active, and for years has had a Sunday school, which in many respects resembled a theological institution. We have not met such a number of men so gifted in prayer in any other church as we found in that of Tre'rddol. Several trained in this school and Society are to-day taking prominent places in the ministry, while some have crossed the bar and reached the haven of love. There are many others following on in the footsteps of their fathers, and are worthy of the best traditions of the past. This church has grown steadily by taking care of its young people. The old families were careful in training their children with profound loyalty to Christ and Methodism, and the first Methodists still live in their children and grandchildren. The officers and leaders of the church to-day are faithful representatives of their fathers, who were the first set of officers at Tre'rddol. Mr. and Mrs. Owen, Dolcletwr, are near relatives of Mr. Rowlands, who brought the first Methodist preachers to the neighbourhood, and also of Humphrey Jones, the first member and officer. James Jones, the Messrs. Thomas, Edwards, Jones of Goetre, Captain Jeol, the Owens, Richard Evans, all embody 'the unfeigned faith' which dwelt first in their ancestors, but which they have nobly fostered and preserved. Their past history will continue to be a source of strength, confidence, and inspiration to the members of this church for years to come.

We have referred to the visit of Jones (Bathafarn) and Parry (Llandegai) to Aberystwyth, Tre'rddol, and other places in the upper part of the county. On their return it is probable that they called at Borth, and held a service there. The Society

was held in a small cottage at Old Borth, and was formed in 1806 by Jones (Bathafarn) when he was the superintendent of the Machynlleth Circuit, which at that time included the county of Cardigan. The first in this neighbourhood to identify himself with the Wesleyans was William Arter. This good man heard Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) preach at Tre'rddol, and then followed him to Talybont, and with a few others, after the sermon preached under the tree previously referred to, there and then decided to give his heart to Christ and to join the new sect. Captain John Hughes and his wife were amongst the first to identify themselves with 'the people called Methodists' at Borth. In 1806 a small chapel was erected under the direction of Jones (Bathafarn), and Captain Hughes rendered most valuable service in giving time, money, and constant attention to the erection. John Hughes had the joy of seeing his labours owned of God and the work prospering, and before his departure to be with Christ, in 1843, was privileged to see a second chapel erected in place of the old one, on a more convenient site and much larger than the first. In the new chapel there were a good Society and congregation, and a number of earnest workers. John Herbert of Llanfihangel, who for forty years was a faithful minister of the New Testament, was brought up in the Borth Society. He died at Tredegar, November 21, 1884, in the sixty-ninth year of his age. Lewis Evans and his brothers from Dolbount. Mr. Evans was a man of considerable originality, and who, after years of faithful toil at Borth, removed to Cwmllinau in the Machynlleth Circuit, where he was largely instrumental in building a new chapel, and where he died in peace a few years ago. Richard James, the grocer, was one of the most intelligent of class-leaders, a modest, upright, and active Christian, who for many years was looked up to as one of the most influential men in the neighbourhood. Richard Lewis, Richard Hughes, J. Simon, Captain Jones, with those previously mentioned, were greatly blessed

in their work. The old chapel becoming too small, the accommodation was increased, but again the building became too small; in 1871 a new chapel was erected, and this step has been followed by increased prosperity, the Rev. Evan Richards and the present writer being then the ministers on the Circuit. In connection with the erection of this chapel the ministers were obliged to undertake the whole of the work and responsibility in connection with the erection, but we have rarely seen an instance of greater generosity. Nearly all the men are engaged in seafaring occupations, a very large proportion are first officers, men of character and good position, and all agreed to give a month's wages. The interest they took in the new chapel made it pleasant to collect the money, which work devolved chiefly on the present writer. The chapel was soon paid for, and Wesleyan Methodism has steadily grown ever since. The old families have long since passed away, but their children and children's children are still actively connected with the work at Borth. What was said of Tre'rddol Methodists is also true of those of Borth. The Arter family, the Messrs. Hughes, Evans, James, Jones, and Williams are loyal and active on board the old ship, and the Methodism of Borth to-day is more healthy and prosperous than ever. It has an interesting past and a promising future.

Eglwysfach is a very interesting village, surrounded by charming scenery, and possessing many attractions. It is probable that Jones (Bathafarn) and William Davies commenced preaching in this village at an early period, and that a small Society was formed there. Morris Evans, Ynysfach, was one of the first to join the Wesleyans. Robert Jones, a native of Llanfyllin, who was living in the neighbourhood, identified himself with 'the people called Methodists' at Eglwysfach, from which place he removed to Llanwryglyn, in the Llanidloes Circuit, and in 1809 he entered the ministry. He died suddenly at Amlwch in 1826, in his fortieth year.

and his seventeenth in the ministry. David Jones, a native of Eglwysfach, a wild, reckless young man, was convinced of sin at Machynllyth under the preaching of John Maurice. He became most fondly attached to Jones (Bathafarn), used to travel with him to various places in his native county, and entered the ministry in 1811, dying at Oswestry in 1862, at the age of seventy-seven. He was illiterate, but laboured hard to acquire knowledge, and with considerable natural talents he became a most powerful and effective preacher. He was deeply interested in his native place and the little Society there. In its early history the work was fluctuating and weak for some years. Services were held in cottages. During the ministry of the Rev. Hugh Hughes he gave special attention to the young, and a number of young people identified themselves with the Society; among others, John Owen, who became a class-leader and local preacher, whose incessant labours, burning zeal, and fidelity to Christ and Methodism will cause his name to live for generations in the three counties in which he worked. His son, the Rev. John Morris Owen, is one of our most active and useful superintendents in the Welsh work. Elizabeth Williams, mother of the late John Williams of Aberdovey and Mr. Hugh Williams, Llanbrynmair, was another worker, who died very happily at Bryn Caemeiln, near Machynlleth. The friends took heart and gathered strength, and the work began to prosper. In 1820 the first chapel was erected during the superintendency of William Davies (Africa), his colleague being the Rev. William Evans. Other good families connected themselves with the Wesleyan Society there, and gave it a new status. John Evans, The Ddolen, brother of Mrs. Elizabeth Williams, and father of the Rev. John Evans (c), became a tower of strength. He was a class-leader and steward, and although he would not consent to be called a preacher, he preached a great deal. He was a fine expositor of the Word of God, and a most upright, godly man. The

Society grew with him and he grew with the Society, becoming a prince in the locality and a prince in the Methodist Church.

The Harrises became a great help in the building up of the Wesleyan Society at Eglwysfach. The singing at this place, which was conducted by David Harris, for many years was a very attractive feature, and not many Christians would get into such ecstasies in the singing of the sweet songs of Zion as Mr. Harris, who was an old man still young when the present writer knew him, a Christian full of life and energy, delighting in the praises of Israel. The Jenkinses of Caerhedyn have also rendered good service to Methodism. David Jenkins, a very intelligent local preacher, leader, steward, and a man of wide influence in the county. Mr. Wolsley, who resided here for several years, assisted in consolidating the Methodist Society, and during the great revival in 1859 was of great service. The Pichards have worked hard and well. For many years there has been a good Society in this village, a substantial Sunday school, and a successful work for Christ has been accomplished. The chapel has passed through several alterations and enlargements, and is now a good country chapel, and the trust is in a satisfactory state.

On June 19 and 20, 1806, a quarterly meeting was held at Aberystwyth at which Owen Davies, John Hughes, and Jones (Bathafarn) were present. The public services were held in the Talbot yard. In the congregation was a man who had come twelve miles to hear the Wesleyans preach—Hugh Morgan of Tyhir, near Ponterwyd. He was an intelligent man, who carefully studied his Bible, but was very dissatisfied with the doctrines he heard preached from time to time from the Calvinistic Methodist pulpit at Ponterwyd; so Hugh Morgan was pleased to hear that the Wesleyan preachers were at Aberystwyth, and the doctrines he heard proclaimed in the Talbot yard were like refreshing water to a thirsty soul. He was delighted and blessed, and at the close

of the service went to see the ministers, and invited them to Ystumtuen. It is more than probable that Hugh Morgan identified himself with the Wesleyans at Aberystwyth that day, there being at Aberystwyth at that time 140 members of Society. Shortly afterwards Jones (Bathafarn) preached in the neighbourhood, when Hugh Morgan and Lewis Williams, Penrhiw, went to hear him, and again pressed him to visit their homes. About a fortnight later Jones (Bathafarn) and William Davies (Africa) were preaching at Tyhir, and Lewis Williams, Penrhiw, and his son, decided to cast their lot with the Wesleyans. The following year Mr. Evan Hughes preached at Tyhir, his text being 'He is the propitiation for our sins.' This sermon created a deep impression, and warm discussions followed. The Bible was read very generally, while those who could not read themselves heard others gladly, and entered most zealously into the debates. Mr. Hughes visited the place again, and his preaching proved highly attractive. The Society meeting was held at Ty'n y' graig (house in the rock), which was then occupied by John Jones, the joiner. In 1811 a Society class was formed, and Hugh Morgan was appointed class-leader, the meeting being held in his own house. Shortly afterwards Mr. Edward Jenkins, the father of the Rev. Isaac Jenkins, identified himself with the Wesleyans. Hugh Morgan had the joy of seeing his own son John, the father of the Revs. Ebenezer and William Morgan, and Mr. John Morgan of Aberystwyth, father of the Revs. John Hugh Morgan and Ebenezer Morgan (both well known in the Methodist Connexion), and other members of his own family, becoming members of the Methodist Society. The house being too small, a cottage known as New House was fitted up as a chapel, and here services were held for some time. Mr. Hugh Morgan was a sweet singer, a talent which seemed to be hereditary, and the members of his own family formed an attractive choir. The Sunday school gradually became a real attraction, and the sweet singing and the sterling

qualities of the few leaders contributed without much preaching in the building up of a healthy Wesleyan church in one of the most isolated and inconvenient localities in the Principality. In 1822 it was found necessary to build a new chapel much larger than the old cottage chapel in which they had worshipped for several years. Mr. Lewis Williams of Penrhiw was able to give them a site, and a large chapel was erected, William Davies (Africa) and David Williams conducting the opening services. Mr. Williams had never been to the place before, and when he came in sight of the chapel, and could only see two or three very poor-looking cottages, he felt quite disgusted that anybody should have thought of erecting a chapel in such an isolated locality. But as he drew near the new chapel he heard Hugh Morgan and his choir singing so effectively that he was astounded, and for a moment thought it must be the songs of the heavenly harpers. He had never heard anything so beautiful, and when he entered the chapel and found a large and intelligent-looking congregation joining most devoutly in the worship of God, his surprise was complete. Asked by his superintendent if he would preach, Mr. Williams replied, ‘Yes, indeed ; my heart has been so filled and fired with this effective singing, and this congregation assembled in such a place.’ The services were accompanied with great power. The trustees of this new chapel were Hugh Morgan, Edward Jenkins, John Morgan, David Morgan, and Edward Davies. The new chapel was soon filled. Edward Jenkins and John Morgan were made class-leaders, in addition to those previously appointed, and shortly afterwards Rowland Edwards was added. The Sabbath at Ystumtuen was a high day ; whole families coming together brought with them their food, and devoted the whole of the day to the service of God. Winter and summer, many came two, three, and four miles to the early morning prayer-meeting, and the Sabbath was a day of gladness and great grace. In 1840 it was found necessary

to enlarge the chapel, and on the 15th of August that year it was reopened. In those years the Wesleyans were subject to persecution and ridicule. One woman seeing Mr. John Morgan with his large family making their exodus from Ponterwyd to Ystumtuen on a Sunday morning, said she would not complain if John Morgan himself went to hell, but it grieved her heart that he should take with him to perdition those dear innocent children.

Ystumtuen, which is derived from *Ystum*, a bend, a shape, a form, and *tuen* a compound of *tu*, side, a part, and *en-aïn*, water, signifying a piece of land by or near the water; English name Waterham. It is an isolated place twelve miles from Aberystwyth, and most difficult to reach. Its isolation was keenly felt in the old days, for the ministers could but seldom visit the place, and they were frequently without preachers; hence local talent was constantly in demand. This fact would account for the large number of ministers raised up by this Society, not a few of whom have taken high positions in our ministry. Ystumtuen has been the scene of many revivals. In 1859 the chapel was enlarged, renovated, and opened for divine worship by the Revs. Isaac Jenkins, Ebenezer Morgan, Isaac Jones, and William Morgan, four ministers who had been brought up in and gone out to the ministry from that church—four ministers who had attained eminent positions in the Principality, and who would be an honour to any church. It was a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. The trustees of the new chapel were John Jones, John Williams, John Jenkins, David Jones, Lewis Powell, John Stephen, and William Jones; the leaders—John Jones, John Williams (who was also the village schoolmaster and local preacher, and a man of eminent piety), W. Jones, J. Jenkins, and J. Evans. The work steadily prospered, and it was found necessary to build a second chapel at Cwmbrwynog, in which one of the most active, intelligent, and generous Methodist Societies has for many years been doing good work. David Morgan, one

of the old Tyhir family, was made leader, and John Jones, who was a powerful man in prayer, and a straightforward, fearless class-leader, often a terror to feeble and lukewarm professors, and especially of evil-doers, settled at Horeb, as the chapel is called, and proved a tower of strength to undefiled religion and to Methodism. The Griffiths of Penrhiw, the Messrs. Owen, Richards, Jones, Captain Paull and his family, all deserve more than a mere passing word. The Revs. John Griffiths, the secretary of the South Wales District, Rice Owen, William Morgan (3rd), J. D. Paull, Ebenezer Morgan, brought up in this Society, have made for themselves a good name in the Wesleyan ministry. John Morgan of Bwadrain, leader, Circuit steward, exhorter, Sunday-school teacher, has lived a singularly useful and beautiful Christian life, and both he and his family have loyally served Methodism.

It was thought desirable to start a third branch in the valley of the Rheidiol, in connection with which John Benjamin did great service, especially with the erection of the chapel. There is no locality in Wales, thinly populated, isolated, and labouring amid many disadvantages, which has been more productive in good works than has Ystumtuen.

Pontrhydygroes and Mynyddbach were visited by Jones (Bathafarn) and Davies (Africa) while they were stationed at Machynlleth. In the summer of 1806 they decided to go farther south than they had been before, and probably preached at these places or in the localities. Small Societies were formed at Llangwyryfon, Lledrod, Talysarn, and in other villages. A small chapel was erected at Llangwyryfon in 1809, in the following year at Pontrhydygroes, and at Mynyddbach in 1813. The Societies at the two latter places continued to improve, the chapels were enlarged, and for many years there were prosperous Methodist churches in these localities. The old chapels, after several alterations and improvements, have been superseded by comfortable, commodious, and attractive sanctuaries. One of the most notable

men on this side of the Circuit was John Hopkins, class-leader, local preacher, and the friend and guide of his neighbours for a number of years. Unpreacher-like in appearance, plain in dress and manner, if not actually untidy, he was yet powerful in prayer, and preached good substantial sermons, marked by conspicuous originality. Well up in his Bible and Wesleyan doctrine, he spoke with power, and devoted years of hard toil to the cause of Christ, his labours being attended with considerable success. He was largely instrumental in the formation of the Society and the erection of the chapel at Cnwch-goch, where for many years there has been a good church.

In 1861 Ystumtuen was made the head of a new Circuit, which included Horeb, Bethel, Pontrhydygroes, Mynyddbach, and Cnwch-goch; the Rev. John Herbert being the minister appointed. For some years two ministers have been appointed to this Circuit, which has been one of the most successful in training ministers. In addition to those mentioned, the Revs. John Hughes (c), William Davies (d), Evan Davies, Thomas Jones (c), Thomas Manuel, Rowland Rowlands, John Rowlands have all entered our ministry from this Circuit; while David Jones, David Lewis, William Ishmael, Thomas Herbert, and Hugh Griffiths have rendered valuable services as local preachers.

Jones (Bathafarn) and Davies (Africa), on the memorable visit in the summer of 1806 so frequently referred to in this work, preached at Talysarn the first evening and the next day, reaching Lampeter for the evening service. The Society which was formed at Talysarn flourished for some years, and gave to our ministry the Rev. David Evans (1st), who did good service for the Church of his choice as superintendent of important Circuits and chairman of the District, but on the withdrawal of so many ministers immediately after the death of Dr. Coke, Talysarn was one of the many places given up.

The first service at Lampeter was held in the parlour of

the Black Lion Inn, which was then kept by Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, who were very kind to the Methodist preachers during their stay in Lampeter and after their removal to Llandovery. The volunteers were in the town at the time, and many of them were greatly affected by the preaching of the two Wesleyans. In consequence of the overflow of the River Teifi, they were not able to continue their journey, hence a second day was spent in this town. Messrs. Jones and Davies preached to large crowds of people, and the service on the second evening was made a great blessing to many souls. On June 26, 1807, the great meeting was held of which Owen Davies wrote to Dr. Coke giving an account, when five thousand persons were present. The following Conference, Aberystwyth was made the head of a new Circuit, and Lampeter was regularly visited. For some years the services were held in the parlour of the Crown Inn. The first members who joined the Society were Evan Thomas, John Edwards, Thomas Jones, David Edwards, Mrs. Lewis (Black Lion), Mary Jones, Margaret Edwards, Ellen Jones, Margaret Davies (Hendai), Elizabeth Davies, and Mary Page. In 1811 a new chapel was erected near the main road from Lampeter to Aberayron, and under the shadow of the college. The first chapel was small but well attended, and it became the scene of a great work of grace. In 1808 Lampeter was made the head of a new Circuit, in which no chapel had as yet been erected, though there were forty-six places on the preaching plan. The Circuit included most of the villages from Blissford (Pontrhydfendigaid) in the north to St. David's Head, in Pembrokeshire, on the south-west, a distance of nearly eighty miles. The Rev. William Rowlands in his *Life of John Davies* says that he failed to find Cilcenin on the old plan of the Lampeter Circuit, and so concluded that the list of dates when chapels were erected given in the Eurgrawn of 1829 (in which list it is stated that Cilcenin Chapel was erected in 1808) was incorrect. It is, however, evident

from the *Memoir of the Rev. Hugh Hughes*,¹ that Cilcenin was included in the Aberystwyth Circuit in 1808; as were also other places, including Pennant in the neighbourhood of Aberayron, a fact which Mr. Rowlands appears to have lost sight of. The first chapel for the use of ‘the people called Methodists’ was built at Llandysul in 1808, and probably through the exertions of the Rev. Hugh Hughes steps were taken to build another the same year at Cilcenin, which was at that time in the Aberystwyth Circuit. In 1829 the old chapel at Lampeter was sold to the authorities of the college; for the old materials and £60 a site was secured in St. Thomas Street, and a new chapel erected, which became too small, and in 1845 was enlarged and a gallery provided. In 1875 a beautiful chapel was erected on the same site, and largely through the diligence and generosity of the Rev. William Morgan, who was then superintendent of the Circuit, the debt was paid off, and Wesleyan Methodism was placed on a good basis for future operation. Lampeter has had the benefit of some stalwart Methodists. John Edmunds was a strong man, mentally and morally; his mother and several other members of his family were devout Methodists. David Williams was a reliable class-leader. Samuel Davies was in many respects a marvellous man; his large business involved many responsibilities, and troubles came frequently to his share. He could truly say ‘deep calleth unto deep,’ one trouble calls another; few men had so many family afflictions, and yet withal he was one of the most diligent of class-leaders and loyal of Methodists. He accepted all his trials, and in the midst of the most trying and distressing circumstances, he seemed to hear his Saviour say, ‘What is that to thee? follow thou Me.’ For many years he never hesitated to follow Christ through darkness and sunshine. David Edwards and his sons, two of whom became local preachers, also did good work. The

¹ *Memoir of Rev. Hugh Hughes*, pp. 34–36.

family at the Royal Oak was well known on account of the generosity of its members. The Evanses will long live, and their memory will be fragrant. David Evans was a most devoted and acceptable local preacher. The Revs. Evan Davies and J. R. Chambers entered the ministry from this church; they travelled in some of the best Circuits, and left a good record. The Rev. Evan Lloyd also went out from this Society.

Among the volunteers who were present at Lampeter when Jones (Bathafarn) and Davies (Africa) preached the first sermon in that town in the year 1806, was a young man from the parish of Llanarth, who was deeply convinced of sin and his need of a Saviour. After he returned to his home he told his family and friends about the new preachers he had heard, and created an intense desire in the hearts of many of them to hear the Wesleyan preachers for themselves. Shortly afterwards Jones of Bathafarn visited Mydyreilin (Armton), and the Rev. David Davies, Castell Howell, one of the old Arminians, and one of the best classical scholars in the Principality, who was ever kind to the Wesleyan preachers, offered him his chapel to preach in. The Wesleyan pioneer gladly accepted the offer, and it was in this chapel the first Wesleyan Society was formed by Mr. Jones, and for four years they worshipped in this sanctuary from time to time. The Wesleyan chapel was erected in 1810 on a part of a field known as the Vicer's Mound, and the chapel has been called the Vicer's Chapel ever since. The first to join the Society was Benjamin Leonard, the young man just referred to, who was appointed the first class-leader, a position which he faithfully held for many years. David Daniel, The Palace; Herbert, Rhiwbren; and Lloyd, Cefnmaes, also identified themselves with the little Society. It was thought advisable to form Society classes in different places to meet the scattered population. One was held at Rhydfawr (Greatford), near Llanarth; another in a farm called Mwdwl, near Aberayron,

and the woman who lived here was one of the most exemplary Christians in the neighbourhood. Betti Evans was another of the devout women who was never ashamed to tell her friends what a Saviour she had found, or to praise Him in the sanctuary in the presence of the congregation. Margaret Evans and her daughter Mrs. Jones were prominent among a group of zealous women who feared God, and delighted in bearing testimony to His goodness and love. Dr. Jones, who was chairman of the South Wales District for many years, and for more than half a century one of the foremost of Welsh ministers, was brought up in the Sabbath school at Vicer's Chapel, and about the year 1818 or 1819 became a member of Society. He began to preach in this church some time after, and although recommended as a candidate for the ministry from another Circuit, this was his home. John Reese, a local preacher who worked hard for years in the Lampeter Circuit, and afterwards in that of Machynlleth, was a native of this locality. There has been a numerous Society at Capel Vicer up to the present time, and they have a long roll of names, men and women who contributed largely towards making the neighbourhood, notwithstanding its isolation, essentially religious. One of the least of its virtues is that it has been long since almost free from public crime.

It is probable that Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) visited Cilcenin about the same time as he did Mydyreilin, and that a Society was formed there, although no reference is made to the place. When the Rev. Hugh Hughes was appointed to the Aberystrywyth Circuit in 1808, he says that one of the most interesting and important events of the year was in connection with Cilcenin. When the first Methodist preachers visited the neighbourhood, a Mr. Rees of Ty-thrichrug, one of a family of pugilists who held the parish in fear, was converted; this Rees was on his way to hear Mr. Hughes preach at Pennant when he was taken seriously ill, and some weeks afterwards he died. During his illness he was radiantly happy in

Christ. Happiness on the verge of eternity was a revelation which was much talked about in the neighbourhood. The two class-leaders at Cilcenin and the minister, when in that part of his Circuit, visited him, and found his testimony clear and confident. The members of the other churches were astounded, and they went to see Rees, and tried to persuade him to renounce Methodism on his death-bed. All their attempts proved in vain ; Rees died joyfully trusting in Christ, and in possession of the full assurance of faith, and his death made a great impression on the neighbourhood. Mr. Hughes's ministry was very attractive, the people following him from place to place for many miles. The chapel was probably built about the end of the year 1808, but since that has been enlarged. The family of the Wern Mill became identified with the work there, and Mr. Jones, the present owner and a direct descendant, keeps up the family traditions.

When Jones (Bathafarn) and Davies (Africa) were returning from South Wales during the historic visit in 1806, to which we have so frequently referred, they proceeded from Carmarthen to Newcastle Emlyn, where they preached that evening and the next morning (being Sunday), and in the town of Cardigan in the afternoon and evening. Their reception in the county town was most hearty and pleasing, and there they preached in a large room in the centre of the town. Mr. Wesley had preached in Cardigan, and his first preachers, like himself, expressed satisfaction with their reception. A small Society was formed here, but it continued weak, and in consequence of the isolated position of the town from the other places in the Circuit, suffered much through lack of preaching. In 1827, mainly through the efforts of the Rev. John Davies, who resided in Cardigan, a chapel was erected in a fairly convenient part of the town, and for some years the Society improved, though it never became sufficiently strong to maintain a good supply of ministerial labour. Wesleyan Methodism was ever held in

high esteem by the people of Cardigan, but the other denominations had strong churches, and were able to command the best pulpit supply, while the Wesleyan pulpit was often without preacher at all, and the faithful attendants frequently disappointed. There are, however, a few names deserving a place in the company of early Methodists, who for zeal, intelligence, devotion, and fidelity could not be surpassed. The wife of the Rev. John Davies, who was the daughter of Captain Matthias, was one. The wife of the Rev. Ebenezer Morgan deserves mention; also the family of Captain Eynon Richards, who were good Methodists, and greatly beloved by all who knew them. John Evans, who was converted under the preaching of Jones (Bathafarn) during his first visit, was made one of the first class-leaders, a position which he held with great credit to himself and advantage to the church for more than half a century. The family of Captain Julian Jones, and Mr. Sais, and the Jameses (the sons) were chiefly instrumental in keeping alive the Society at New Quay for years. The assistance of Mr. Hughes, son of the Rev. William Hughes, who for many years resided at Llechryd, was invaluable. He was a local preacher, choir-master, superintendent and teacher of Sunday school, class-leader, and really factotum of the Society, which drooped and pined after his departure. The minister lived at Aberayron, more than twenty miles distant, and with other places to supply, and only one local preacher, about two Sundays out of five were all he could give Cardigan. Several attempts were made to revive the work, but each attempt was followed with disappointment.

In the year 1884 the old chapel and site were sold for £300; the money is held by the board of trustees for chapel purposes, and will be available for the erection of a chapel in the neighbourhood at any future time, if opportunity should offer, in or near Cardigan.

The pioneers, Jones and Davies, were welcomed on their return journey at Newcastle, where they preached again. A

Society was formed in this interesting town, and a small chapel erected, but after years of hard toil and noble devotion on the part of a few families, it was decided to give up the Society and to withdraw from the neighbourhood, which is well provided for by other denominations.

On the evening of the same day Jones (Bathafarn) and his colleague reached the neighbourhood of Llandysul, preaching at Penrhiw, and the next morning in Davies's (Castell Howell) chapel. The good old Arminian minister had also made provision for them at the inn, and for a collection to be made, which he handed to Mr. Jones in support of their mission, with a very earnest desire that they should come again and preach in his chapel. Mr. Jones told him they hoped to form a Society in the neighbourhood, and Mr. Davies wished them God-speed, and promised all assistance. A Society was formed at Llandysul, which met for a time in an upper room of the King's Head, and among the first to identify themselves with it were William Thomas of Typoeth, who became an active worker, local preacher, and a most generous supporter of the work of God throughout the Circuit, and left a small legacy in his will in support of the work at Llandysul. He was persecuted for a time, but his brother joined the Methodists, and this fact gave him great encouragement. Enoch Jones of Abereinon, and Evan Evans, Penpistill, joined the Society the same night, when Jones (Bathafarn) was present. The Abercerdin family also identified themselves with the little flock. Miss Esther Rees, who became the devoted wife of William Thomas, and several members of the Jones family, became most active workers. The chapel was erected in 1808, and a strong Society was established. Timothy Jones and his brother Dan began to preach, the former entering the ministry, and for many years travelling in the South Wales Circuits. John Owen and David Jones also became useful preachers, in which capacity most valuable service was rendered to the cause of Methodism at Llandysul.

Daniel Thomas, James Evans, Isaac Jones, Thomas Williams, who kept the post-office, and J. D. Thomas, draper, were men of power, who offered most ungrudgingly all they possessed upon the altar of the Church of their choice.

The old chapel has long since given place to a much larger one, and the present edifice has passed through several additions and improvements.

Mr. Enoch Jones of Abereinon, living nearly three miles from the Llandysul Chapel, often held services in his own house; and a class was held there as early as 1809, the members going to Sacrament and to one of the services at the chapel on Sundays. In 1833 a chapel was built by Mr. Jones on a piece of land of his own. The friends in the neighbourhood contributed what they could, he himself paying the residue, and opening the chapel free from debt. Mr. Jones would call the little sanctuary Bethel, but Mr. Lloyd, the landowner of the neighbourhood, would insist on calling it 'Enoch's Chapel,' and placing a stone with that inscription on the chapel. Methodistically it is known as Bethel, but by all the old people in the neighbourhood as 'Enoch's Chapel.' Mr. Jones was a very intelligent, upright, devout man, who for fifty-one years walked closely with God, and was a pattern to his neighbours, all of whom, rich and poor, looked up to him as their guide, philosopher, and friend. He died in 1859, at the age of seventy-nine. His son, Evan Jones, followed in his father's footsteps; and with Daniel Jones (Nantegryd), and Evan Jones, and other good workers, the Bethel Society has been one of the most prosperous in the Circuit. Methodism owes much in this neighbourhood to a few intelligent, godly, and zealous families, to whose labours it is largely due that Llandysul and Bethel have held their own in face of many difficulties, and are at present interesting churches, active and promising.

It is very probable that Jones (Bathafarn) and Davies (Africa) were the first to preach at Tregaron, as it was really on their

way to and from Lampeter. This little town, on the banks of the River Teifi, is within a short distance of Llangeitho, where Rowlands, the great Apostle of Calvinistic Methodism, carried on his work with so much success for so many years, and has had one of the strongest Societies of that denomination in the county. The Rev. Ebenezer Richard, father of the late Henry Richard, M.P., was their pastor at the time Wesley's preachers made their first visit. Ebenezer Richard was one of the most prominent of Welsh ministers at the time, and often preached in the great association meetings with John Ellis, Jones (Talysarn), Roberts (Clynog), and others. Henry Richard, in speaking of the Calvinistic Methodist pulpit of those days, says: 'I think I cannot be mistaken in saying that the great Welsh preachers whom I was constantly hearing in my boyhood—and the race is by no means extinct yet—were unrivalled masters of sacred eloquence.' The Calvinistic revival had taken a firm hold in the county of Cardigan, and there were a few of the older Nonconformist churches who had also profited by the good work of Rowlands and his coadjutors. There were also a number of old Presbyterian churches that had become mild Arians, and the Church of England was spiritually dead. The Calvinistic Methodist Church was the popular, orthodox, and the one church of the people. They had been working for seventy years, and they succeeded in forming strong Societies and erecting large chapels. They had also the popular preachers. Under these circumstances it was not easy to establish Wesleyan Societies, to build chapels, supply the pulpits, and withal raise preachers and leaders to carry on the work. Tregaron suffered from these disadvantages for years. The family of Evan Jones, the saddler, identified themselves with the Wesleyans, and the daughters became especially helpful in the building up of the Society in the town. For many years they were compelled to hold the services in the long room of an inn, which was the best place they could get at

the time. When David Jones, Tygwyn ; Thomas Lewis, the saddler, and their brother-in-law Evan Jones (father of Major Jones, the late American Consul in Cardiff and the present member of Parliament for the Carmarthen Boroughs) ; Joseph Jones and his brothers John and George ; Thomas, The Talbot (father of the Rev. W. R. Thomas, the popular vicar of Abersychan), with their families, identified themselves with the small Society at Tregaron, the tide turned and the work began to prosper. David Jones was a class-leader, an upright, intelligent, and highly respected citizen. He never became a local preacher ; but frequently, when without a preacher at the chapel, he would most effectively read a sermon to the congregation, which was greatly enjoyed by the people, and was made a blessing to many. He died in triumph in 1866. Thomas Lewis became a most useful local preacher, rendering valuable service throughout the wide Circuit ; he passed away in peace in 1856. Mr. Joseph Jones entered the Wesleyan ministry, and for nearly half a century has laboured in many of our leading Circuits. The four sisters, Bertha Lewis, Deborah Jones (Tygwyn), Mary Jones (Cammer), and Charlotte Jones (Prospect), were devoted Christian women—intelligent, generous, hospitable, zealous, and true Methodists. The first-named was not physically strong, but for years after the death of her husband she managed a prosperous and growing business, and always found time to attend the means of grace, to provide a home for the preacher, and to read a great deal of her Bible and other good books. Mrs. Lewis never hesitated to close her shop any night when there was a meeting in the chapel which she should attend. The week-night service, the prayer-meeting, the class-meeting were always considered more important than the keeping open of the shop. Other grocers and drapers might do as they thought advisable, Mrs. Lewis would not let any one decide for her or stand in her way. The farm, the shop, or the business is often in the way of religion. ‘It is strange,’ said the Rev. Rowland

Hughes, ‘that religion is not found sometimes in the way of the shop, the farm, or the business.’ This good Christian woman when on her death-bed reflected the sunshine of the heavenly land. ‘The body was reduced to a minimum; her heart and flesh failed her,’ said the Rev. Robert Jones, who was with her while she stood on the verge, ‘but her face shone like that of an angel; the sight was lovely; I shall never forget it. She could only lisp—“All is well”—and then passed into perfect peace.’ David Thomas was a good Christian man and a faithful class-leader. John Williams, the joiner, was a man of great power in prayer, and ever anxious to live a pure life. Rees Jones was zealous and faithful unto death. William Jones, Tygwyn, was one of the most intelligent, sensible, spiritually-minded, and promising young men it was the privilege of the writer to know—the idol of his friends, the hope of the Wesleyan Church. He ceased on earth to work and live, and passed away to live and serve in the palace of the King when only twenty-eight years of age. He was the son of David Jones, the old leader. William Lewis, the son of Thomas and Bertha Lewis, had a sweet disposition, and was a most attractive and lovable young man. He had set his mind on building a new chapel at Tregaron, towards which he had promised £100, and had influenced the trustees and the Circuit to ‘arise and build’; but while the church was in course of erection he was suddenly called higher to the mansions of the blest. The trustees were greatly perplexed; for to lose his valuable assistance and all his financial support so suddenly, was a severe blow, the effects of which will long be felt and will remain one of the mysteries of Providence. There were in connection with the Tregaron Society original characters. Old Daniel and his wife were as quaint in many respects as Daniel Quorm, if not equal intellectually; and there were a few others, men and women of fervent zeal and exemplary Christian piety.

Old Mrs. Davies, the Mill, Llangyby or Penbont, was a Methodist possessing courage and zeal enough to have joined a band of workers headed by John Nelson. Her many long journeys to Lampeter, Aberayron, Llandysul, and elsewhere in order to secure preachers with the view of keeping alive a Methodist service in the neighbourhood, were really marvellous. She contributed largely, and herself made every provision for the services and homes for the preachers, paying the expenses for nearly forty years. The Cilgwyn Chapel was taken over at the death of the old minister in 1863, and ever since has been worked by the ministers on the Lampeter Circuit. It is one of the oldest Societies in the county, and drifted into a mild Arianism, and under the Rev. Evan Lewis, who in his younger days was a Wesleyan, into Arminianism. The members offered themselves at his death to the superintendent of the Lampeter Wesleyan Circuit, and the offer was by him accepted, and it has been considered a part of that Circuit ever since.

Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) commenced a Wesleyan Society at New Quay, and in 1812 a small chapel was built there, but unfortunately in a very inconvenient position. It was thought at the time that it would be fairly central for the inhabitants of the villages, and at first it served well enough, but after the excitement had passed away it was found inconvenient and the distance became a burden. A few faithful friends held on faithfully for years, but finally yielded, and the old chapel was disposed of.

Aberayron was made the head of a Circuit, chiefly through the instrumentality of the Rev. Robert Owen, who, when he became supernumerary, settled down there. The chapel is small, and the Society has not gained much strength.

The reception given to Wesleyan Methodism in this county was encouraging on the whole, and its progress was satisfactory. Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) and William Davies carried everything before them for a time. They obtained converts

in large numbers, and their prosperity indicated a grand march through the county. But the withdrawal of so many ministers a few years later was equally disastrous to Methodism. In 1808 there were of preaching-places in the Lampeter Circuit, forty-six; a few years later more than thirty of these were given up, and up to the present time no Wesleyan Society has ever been formed in any of them. A few years longer would have put some of these Societies on their feet, and they could have walked themselves. It is sometimes said that the Cardiganshire farmer is not generous; how far this is true it is difficult to decide. The county is not a rich one; people generally work hard, live hard, and strive to save a little. We have known some instances of noble self-sacrifice in the interest of the work of God in Cardiganshire. In the Ystumtuen Circuit there was a good Christian woman who enjoyed religion and felt it an honour to do anything to assist in carrying on the work. She was most careful about her class money, but after a long struggle with bad harvest, sickness in the family, and other disappointments, she found herself at the end of the quarter without a penny to pay for her ticket. Greatly distressed, she prayed and thought and contrived until the day before quarter day without light; but it occurred to her that she would take one of the last of her chickens to Aberystwyth market to sell it, which she did, walking at least twenty-four miles, and on her return home she was delighted in being able to take her money to her leader. There was a most zealous steward at Tre'rddol, who walked to a quarterly meeting held at Cardigan, a distance of about fifty miles. The sum he had to carry to the meeting was only ten shillings, but old Evan Davies felt that to travel one hundred miles to represent the Society at the quarterly meeting was not too great a sacrifice to make. And he used to say in after years that the blessings he had received at that quarterly meeting had made him rich for a long time after; 'it will help me as long

as I live, and when I get home to another world it will be to me a joy for ever.'

Cardiganshire has flooded the Principality with clergymen ; it has also given the Wesleyan ministry a larger number of ministers than any other of the Welsh counties, including men like Dr. Thomas Jones, Dr. William Davies, Isaac Jenkins, Ebenezer Morgan, Isaac Jones, John Richards, John Herbert, Humphrey Jones, James Jones, J. R. Chambers, William Davies (D). All these have passed away, but they were an honour and a strength to the Church of their choice, and although dead they yet speak, and for a long time will continue to do so. There are also still living a host of men in the foremost positions in our ministry in the Welsh and English work, who still cling to *Ceredigion*.

The early visits of Jones (Bathafarn) in this county were apostolic in their results—

‘Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
And fools who came to scoff remained to pray.’

His stay was short, but greatly blessed. Wesleyan Methodism is not strong in the county, but it has borne a faithful testimony to truth, and those doctrines preached by the much persecuted Wesleyan preachers are generally accepted to-day.

‘Truth in the end shines divinely clear.’

CHAPTER XVII.

CHESTER.

Mr. Wesley's Visits to Chester—Cawley, Alpraham—Bennet and Nelson—Thomas Brisco—Robert Roberts—The New Room—Alexander Mather—The Octagon Chapel—Richard Rodda and Sunday Schools—Wesley's Last Visit—His Attachment to the Chester Methodists—The Leading Families—Samuel Bradburn—Richard Harrison—Richard Reece—Chester the Gateway to North Wales—Thomas Foulkes—Richard Williams—Mr. Bruce—George Morley—The Home of the Williamses—Bryan's Conversion—Begins to Preach—Meets Jones, Bathafarn—Alderman Bowers' Conversion—His Mayoralty—St. John's Chapel erected—John Bowers, President of Conference—Chester Circuit and North Wales—Wrexham—Owen Davies and John Hughes—New Chapel—New Circuit—Societies formed at Brymbo, Gresford, Caergwrla, Ruabon—Welsh Methodism in Chester—Evan Jones—New Chapel—John Richards—Thomas Davies—New Chapel—City Road—Leading Methodists, etc.

MR. WESLEY rode to Chester on Saturday, June 20, 1752, 'and preached in the accustomed place,' a little without the gates, near St. John's Church. 'One single man, a poor ale-house keeper, seemed disgusted, spoke a harmless word, and ran away with all speed. All the rest behaved with the utmost seriousness while I declared the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.' So runs Mr. Wesley's record of his first day in Chester. The next day he preached in a much larger place near St. Martin's Church, after which he went to church, and heard a plain, strong, useful sermon upon the 'faith of Abraham.' At one o'clock he stood at the door of the house on one side of a kind of square large enough to contain ten or twelve thousand people. At four he again preached to a larger congregation, which included many of the gentry in

the place, and again at six to a still larger crowd. A few drunken people had been giving him some annoyance, but, on the whole, the people listened with growing interest and solemnity. Notwithstanding that Mr. Wesley was on his way to Ireland, business of an important character demanded his return to Bristol before crossing to Dublin. The next morning he rode off for Bristol, returning to Chester on the Friday, when he was told that the house in which he had preached on Sunday had been pulled down by the mob. The Mayor had been appealed to in vain, and mob rule prevailed. On Saturday night he preached in the old room, and on Sunday morning at seven he took his stand by the ruins of the house, and explained to the crowd the principles of the sect everywhere spoken against. After the service, Mr. Wesley went to St. Martin's Church ; the minister expressed his sorrow on account of what had been done in the previous week, and his determination to leave such a people as soon as he could find a suitable place. He spoke freely of his regret that such an outrage should have been committed in his parish, and that his labours had not left a better impression upon them. Mr. Wesley preached again in the city at one and four the same day to large and serious congregations.

This is the account given by Mr. Wesley of his first visit to Chester. It will be seen that in the city of Chester Mr. Wesley was preceded by some of his own preachers. He refers to 'an accustomed place' near St. John's Church where he preached on his first visit to that ancient and renowned city. Anne Smith, afterwards the wife of Dr. Whitehead, who resided at Alpraham, was probably the principal agent in the introduction of Methodism into Cheshire. She had become serious, and suffered much persecution from her kins-folk and others, of which she found the friendship of the Cawleys to be the principal alleviation. To escape these trials she removed to London. Here she heard the Wesleys and Whitefield, and became further instructed in the things

of the kingdom of God. She now related by letter to her friends the Cawleys of Moat House, Alpraham, what she had seen and heard. Her mother also visited London, and confirmed her reports, and the artless story kindled the warmest sympathy among her friends in her native village. It was then determined to invite Mr. Wesley or some of his preachers to visit the place, and in 1742 or 1743 John Bennet and John Nelson came and preached at the Moat Farm under a pear tree in the orchard. Mr. Wesley preached at Woodley, Cheshire, on June 14, 1744; he was then accompanied by John Bennet. On Friday and Saturday, May 26 and 27, 1745, 'at the request of John Bennet, I preached in several places in Lancashire and Cheshire,' writes Mr. Wesley in his journal. On Thursday, November 7 of the same year, he preached at Stayley Hall (or Stabley Hall). It is evident from an account given by John Bennet of the work in Cheshire (Jackson's *Life of Charles Wesley*), that he was in charge of the work of God in Cheshire, and that the Methodists were persecuted both by Churchmen and Dissenters, and frequently rejected from the Lord's Supper by the clergy. These early followers very earnestly requested Mr. Wesley to visit them and administer the Sacrament himself, which he did in 1747 and 1748, preaching at Woodley Green and Stabley Hall. In 1749 he accepted an invitation given by Richard Cawley to preach at Moat House, Alpraham, which place he visited October 20, 21, and 22; and arrangements were made for regular services being held in this village. Christopher Hopper, who had previously accompanied Mr. Wesley, soon visited Alpraham, and joined a class there, and also at Poole. John Nelson followed, ruled a class paper, and Richard Cawley was made the first leader. Mr. Sims and his two brothers joined the Methodist Society on this occasion. For some years after 1751 preaching was in the house of Mr. Sims, who, later on, with John Nelson, planned the new chapel, on the foundation-stone of which the York-

shire evangelist preached. The fruit of the pear tree in Crawley's orchard was sold, and the money given to the missions; and in 1857 the old tree was substituted by another for the same purpose, which is known as the 'Memorial Tree.' Some of the early Methodist preachers, who had preached at Woodley and Alpraham, visited Chester, which was probably included in what was known as 'John Bennet's Round.' It is suggested that John Bennet himself was the first to visit Chester. If so, it is probable that he was accompanied by John Nelson. Christopher Hopper visited Chester in 1749 on his way from the North to Bristol, and he says that he 'found the Lord in every place.' After joining the Societies at Alpraham and Poole he visited the suburbs of Chester; the hand of the Lord was on the land. 'A good work was begun then,' he writes, 'which has increased and continued to this day.' Mr. Richard Jones, living in Love Lane, was the first to invite the Methodist preachers to his house, where the services were held for some time. From Love Lane they removed to an old barn on the south side of St. Martin's Church, where the services were held and the Society met from time to time. Thomas Olivers preached at this place before he entered the ministry. For several years the Society was weak, and not always did perfect harmony prevail. Thomas Brisco joined the Society, and some time after left a good impression on the mind of his old companion Robert Roberts, who was greatly prejudiced against the Methodists, but ultimately became a Wesleyan minister.

When Mr. Wesley visited Chester in 1753 he found a great change had come over the people. The Mayor was a man of courage as well as honesty, and, unlike his predecessor, he ordered the city crier to proclaim that rioters would be severely punished. The result was that the mob that gathered about the door of the preaching-house lost their courage, dispersed themselves, and Mr. Wesley had a full house and a serious congregation to preach to. In June of

1754 Robert Roberts identified himself with ‘the people called Methodists,’ and shortly afterwards found peace with God, and became a most useful member of Society. He soon began to preach, first at Chester, then in North Wales; in 1759 he entered the ministry. About the time that Robert Roberts joined the Methodist Society he became acquainted with Thomas Foulkes, a young man from Llandrillo, in the county of Merionethshire, who had recently come to live in a village in the neighbourhood of Chester, and who, in 1756, identified himself with the Methodist Society in that city. Mr. Foulkes became greatly attached to Methodism, and although he removed to Bala, and afterwards to Machynlleth, he kept up his connection with the Society at Chester, paying his class and other moneys with great regularity, and making a provision in his will that the sum should be paid with the same regularity after his death. In 1756 Mr. Wesley, returning from Ireland in the month of August, visited Chester, preaching in the room and also in the square. When he visited the city in the spring of the following year, the Society was a third larger, and there were signs of improvement. In May 1759 Mr. Wesley again visited Chester, and also went to Mold, in Flintshire. Notwithstanding the races which attracted the rich, and the market day which attracted the poor, there were multitudes of people who were attentive and deeply impressed by the preaching of the great evangelist. In March 1760 he again preached at Chester and Mold. There were people present who had come to make a disturbance, but the ‘bridle from above was in their teeth,’ and they did no harm. The conditions of ordination in the Church of England greatly exercised his mind at this time. ‘Our Church,’ he writes, ‘requires that clergymen should be men of learning, and to this end have a university education. But how many have a university education and yet no learning at all? Yet these men are ordained. Meantime, one of eminent learning, as well as unblamable behaviour, cannot be ordained

because he was not at the university. What a mere farce is this! Who would believe that any Christian bishop would stoop to so poor an evasion?' The question of Church and Dissent was inevitably coming to the front, and some of his followers were pressing that the step should be taken of separation from the Church. Mr. Wesley passed through Chester in the following August. In April 1761 Mr. Wesley preached at Chester, Tattenhall, and Mold, and the congregations were all deeply attentive. In April 1762 Chester was again visited, and many were found longing 'for the whole salvation of God.' The following August Mr. Wesley reports, 'Never was the Society in such a state before. Their jars and contentions were at an end, and I found nothing but peace and love among them. About twelve of them believed they were saved from sin, and their lives did not contradict their profession. Most of the rest were strongly athirst for God, and looking for Him continually.'

In July 1764 Mr. Wesley spent two days preaching at Chester and Tattenhall, and observed that if Chester had a little more field preaching it would be as quiet as London. In April 1765 he again paid a short visit to Chester. On Friday, August 16, 1765, Mr. Wesley preached in the new chapel, called the Octagon, which was well filled, and the next day and again on the following Sunday to large multitudes of people. Mr. Wesley remarked that 'the grace of God concurs with Providence, a new house brings with it a new congregation and a new blessing from God.' The opening of the new chapel gave an impetus to Wesleyan Methodism in the city. Chester was now made the head of the Circuit, and Alexander Mather the first superintendent. The Society and congregation included several influential and leading families. In April 1766 Mr. Wesley was again in Chester, where he visited the sick, and comforted not a few by ministrations of love. In April 1768 the city was again the scene of his labours. On Easter Day he took his stand

in the square at St. Martin's Ash, where he had often preached before the chapel was erected, and the people were as attentive as if in a house. While in Chester on this occasion he corrected Miss Gibbert's journal, of which he wrote, 'A masterpiece of its kind. What a prodigy of a child, soon ripe and soon gone.' Miss Gibbert, who was born in the West Indies, and was probably one of the family of Nathaniel Gibbert, came to England to finish her education, but at the age of seventeen a fever sent her to Abraham's bosom. Thomas Taylor, who visited her on her death-bed, and preached and published her funeral sermon, says that he witnessed the sweet resignation and consolation with which she was favoured. On Mr. Wesley's next visit to Chester in March 1769, he had a season of great joy. The Society was prosperous, united, and becoming a power for good in the city. Some of the members had triumphed in death, leaving a most explicit testimony as to the power of God's grace. The following August he was again in the city, and finished Dr. Warner's *History of the Irish Rebellion*, returning on the last Saturday in March 1770. It was on this journey he suggested that it is advisable to ride with a slack rein, adding that he had done so, 'riding over one hundred thousand miles on horseback, reading history, poetry, and philosophy while riding, and that with two exceptions he had always been able to travel safely.' Chester was now one of Mr. Wesley's most frequented cities. We find him here again in March 1771, where he remained for three or four days preaching with great effect to large congregations; and again in March 1772, when nearly all the young men from the Academy were present, to whom Mr. Wesley preached from the words, 'In wickedness be ye children, but in understanding be ye men.' Nothing special is reported with regard to Mr. Wesley's visit in April 1774. Two years later he had great satisfaction in finding an earnest, loving, well-established people in Chester. During his next visit in 1777, he rode from Little Leigh to Chester, being

straitened for time, and although he had not been able to travel on horseback for years, he was not hurt, and preached with vigour and power. Returning from Ireland the October of the same year, he was again with his old friends at Chester. During the next three visits to that city nothing special is reported by him. In April 1781 he refers to the labours of Jonathan Hern and William Boothby, and says they had been greatly blessed. The congregations were much larger, the Society increased, there was unity among the people, and peace with all round about them. On this visit he preached the funeral sermon of ‘Good old Sister Cawley’ of Alpraham. She had been a ‘mother in Israel,’ he says, and ‘a pattern of all good works.’ He was again in the city in 1782, and when he came in 1784 he was surprised to find ‘that morning preaching was left off,’ because in winter the people would not come. ‘If this be true,’ added Mr. Wesley, ‘the Methodist people are a fallen people. They have lost their first love, and they can never recover till they do their first works.’ In April 1785 Mr. Wesley passed through Chester on his way to Ireland, and again in July on his return from that country; but during these visits nothing of special interest attracted his attention. In April 1787 he preached at Chester, also in July of the same year. Methodism was prosperous at this time, notwithstanding considerable agitation. Many of the preachers were strongly in favour of separation from the Church of England; Mr. Wesley himself failing to see his way clear to carry out the plan which some suggested, determined to go on as he had hitherto. This year was one of special interest in connection with Chester Methodism. Writing to Mr. Richard Rodda on January 17, 1787, Mr. Wesley said: ‘I am glad you have taken in hand that blessed work of setting up Sunday schools in Chester. It seems these will be one great means of reviving religion throughout the nation. I wonder Satan has not sent out some able champion against them.’ The Sunday schools at

Chester originated with the Methodists of that city, though the rules were submitted to the bishop of the diocese, and had his approval. They contained nearly seven hundred children, who were taken to church once every Sunday. ‘We had no intention,’ said Richard Rodda, the Methodist superintendent of Chester, ‘as some persons represented, to make disciples to Methodism, but to train the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, that they might become useful members of civil and religious society.’ Three years before, Raikes had first called attention to the importance of Sunday schools in the *Gloucester Journal*. These Chester schools had now been in operation for some time. It is therefore evident that the movement was taken up by the Wesleyans of Chester at an early date, and that their efforts were accompanied with success. In April 1788 Mr. Wesley visited Chester again, and preached by special request on the Trinity to an affectionate congregation, which wanted ‘nothing but more life and fire.’ His next visit was in July 1789; his home was with the family of Mr. T. Brisco, which he describes as ‘the most loving’ he ever saw. The family were all in tears when the good man left the house. This fact is often reported as the result of intercourse which Mr. Wesley had with the families with whom he stayed, and the deep spiritual impression made upon those so privileged.

On April 5 and 6, 1790, the founder of Methodism visited Chester for the last time. The chapel was crowded, and he preached with great power. He speaks of the Chester Methodists as ‘old and affectionate friends.’ For thirty-eight years Mr. Wesley had been a regular visitor to the city; he had seen the Society in its infancy, passing through severe storms of persecution and trial, and weak like ‘the smoking flax.’ He had seen the old barn in ruins; he had seen the mob standing ready to make an onslaught on himself and his followers. He had seen the little Society passing through various stages of development, a large commodious sanctuary

taking the place of the old barn, a large Society and congregation of loyal, intelligent, and influential citizens crowding the new place of worship; a people peacefully united in thought and work, in whom he saw the grace of God; and he rejoiced with them in their prosperity, departed with praise in his heart and on his lips.

During Mr. Wesley's visits to Chester crowds of people came to hear him from the villages for miles round; some of these were converted, and returned to their respective homes with the joy of salvation. In March 1770 Samuel Bradburn and Richard Harrison—two men who became eminently useful in the early history of Methodism—were brought to a knowledge of the truth. Mr. Harrison was converted under the preaching of Parson Greenwood. Mr. Wesley, writing to Jonathan Pritchard in Boughton, Chester, January 16, 1753, mentions the names of S. Roughly and Brother Jones, and expresses a hope that they are 'pressing on and walking in love.' It is probable that Jonathan Pritchard lived next door to Vine House, which was called Pilgrim Inn, because Mr. Wesley and his preachers used to stay there.

Some years afterwards Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, Mr. and Mrs. Walker, and Mr. G. Lowe became Methodists, and a new impetus was given to the Society, which eventually led to the erection of the Octagon Chapel. The trustees of that chapel, in addition to Messrs. Bennet, Walker, and Rowe, were Richard Bruce, John Gardner, James Woolrich, and Thomas Brown. Mr. James Woolrich was a most active Christian, devoting his time to visit the sick and dying. He visited John Gardner, and was the instrument in leading him to Christ. Mr. Gardner became a most useful local preacher, constantly preaching in various places in Cheshire, as well as on the borders of the Principality. Daniel Jackson, who entered the ministry, was one of his converts. His wife was Miss Janion, one of a family of good Methodists. Mr. Charles Nevill was another who became a bold and courageous

defender of Methodism in the city of Chester. Some years afterwards he removed to Swansea, then to Llanelly. Mrs. Nevill was a very devoted Methodist, and was a friend of the poor, by whom she was greatly beloved. Returning from her son's house at Llanelly, she slipped while crossing a rail, and died a few hours later. Mr. Charles Nevill, who was the member of Parliament for the Carmarthen Boroughs a few years since, was a near relative of the above family. The Chester Society was blessed with many godly women, including Mrs. Lewis, Hannah Dodd, Alice Pugh, Randless, Nodin, Huxley, Hannah Pritchard, Parr, Anne Powell, all of whom bore a faithful testimony to Methodist doctrine and precept, and died in the faith of the gospel. Mr. William Wilkinson and J. Janion, senior, were converted about 1770, and joined the Society about the same time. The former became a very able expositor of the Word of God, writing several works on the Holy Scriptures. John Reece of Bruerton Park, who had been hesitating between Calvinism and Arminianism for some time, removed to Chester, and was led to decide in favour of the latter, after a sermon by Mr. Robert Roberts. The family became good, zealous Methodists. There were a host of others scattered throughout the villages for miles round, who were members at the old Octagon Chapel. Samuel Bradburn preached his first sermon at Northop, where a Society had been commenced by John Oliver, the superintendent minister of Chester, on December 9, 1773, taking for his text, 'As captain of the host of the Lord, I am now come.' Mr. Harrison identified himself with the Northop Society, and became a leader and local preacher. In 1774 Samuel Bradburn entered the ministry. He soon became one of the most popular preachers in Methodism, and in 1799 was elected President of the Conference. Under the ministry of Duncan Wright, who was superintendent of Chester in 1783-84, Richard Reece, a young man of eighteen, was converted. He was soon appointed to take charge of a

Society class within a few miles of his father's house, and first began to exhort and then to preach. In 1787 he was appointed to Oxfordshire Circuit, and for sixty-three years he occupied a most important position in the Methodist ministry. Twice he was elected President of the Conference, the second time in 1835, being a year of considerable agitation ; but his wisdom, tact, and firmness were recognized by all. He was sent as representative to the American Conference, retired from a long and successful career with the love and approbation of the Connexion as his crown of rejoicing, and died in great peace, April 27, 1850.

The geographical position of Chester has long made it the gateway to and from North Wales. The Wesleyan Society in that city did important work in preparing the way for the introduction of Methodism into North Wales, from whence it also received some influential and active workers in return. We have referred to the conversion of Robert Roberts, Thomas Foulkes, and others, who were largely instrumental in preparing the way for Wesley and his preachers in several places. Another family was that of the Williams, who deserve more than a passing reference. Richard Williams's father was probably a native of Newmarket, in the county of Flint, a man of considerable intelligence, well versed in Scripture, and of a reflective mind. He was a member of the Presbyterian Church, but had heard of the Wesleyan movement, and was carefully considering and comparing Calvinism with Arminianism. He was led by the hand of Providence to Chester about the time Wesleyan Methodism was first established there, heard the Methodist preacher, and judged for himself. Gradually he felt that the Wesleyan interpretation of the Bible was the correct one, and he identified himself with its followers. He, like others, was greatly persecuted, but remained a true-hearted and most influential Methodist. He often travelled fifteen and twenty miles after his day's toil in order that he might hear a Methodist sermon.

He was converted under very peculiar circumstances. One of Mr. Wesley's first local preachers in the neighbourhood of Chester was a Mr. Smith, who was often known as Dr. Smith. He was a most devoted and godly man. There was also in the neighbourhood a Mr. Bruce, who scornfully ridiculed the Methodist local preacher. Mr. Smith and Richard Williams's father were bosom friends. Mr. Bruce one day in the hearing of Richard Williams spoke very disparagingly of Mr. Smith ; the remarks went to his heart, and left a deep impression upon his mind. He was another day greatly impressed by seeing a crowd of people on their knees watching a cockfight, which further distressed him. The conversion of Mr. Bruce, through the instrumentality of the local preacher he had so much despised, was made a blessing to him. Bruce had a brother a clergyman who very highly respected Mr. Wesley, and who induced him to go and hear the great preacher when he was announced to take a service in the neighbourhood. Through some means or other Mr. Wesley failed to be present, and the pulpit was occupied by Mr. Smith. The Lord of Hosts was with him ; and under the preaching of the despised local preacher the critic was convinced of sin, gave his heart to God, and became a faithful and useful Christian. Richard Williams was again impressed. In this he saw the hand of God. Influenced by a friend, he went to the Chester Races, but this incident aroused his conscience to such an extent that he was in great agony till he was led to give his heart fully to Christ. The Wesleyan Society was the scene of considerable ferment in those days. Antinomianism was rampant, and the five points were constantly discussed. 'Christian perfection' was the doctrine which was most constantly ridiculed by the younger men of that city, many of whom left the Society and went over to the other side. Richard Williams, well read, keen, and fearless, stood by the few Wesleyans, defended their doctrine against all-comers, and soon became a tower of strength to them—always

able to hold his own in debate. There is no doubt that the extreme, unreasonable, unphilosophic, and unscriptural view which was taken by one of the preachers did great injury to many who were struggling for more light, and ultimately caused considerable agitation in the Society, and became a stumbling-block to many who ceased to walk with the Wesleyan Methodists in the city. Richard Williams, although not a member of Society, defended the doctrine, and the discussions led him to consider his own character in the light of the views he entertained. He was led again another day, almost unconsciously, to the Chester Races, and the contrast was brought most forcibly before his mind. Christian perfection on the one side, the race-course, with its long train of most flagrant vices, on the other. He stood quietly before the bar of his own conscience. He was deeply repentant, and made up his mind never to visit such scenes any more. There were many others who became identified with the Methodist Society about the same time, among whom Richard Williams stood out prominently, and was looked up to by all. The Book of books he carefully and diligently studied ; he was well acquainted with the history of the early Christians, Church history, its creeds, discipline, and constitution. When about twenty-eight years of age, he married Miss Elizabeth Gardner of Tatten Hall, and they settled at Acre, near Wrexham. A Society class was formed at his house, he himself being leader. Being still connected with the Chester Society, the preachers often conducted services in his home, where they were hospitably entertained. The nine children with which they were blessed became prominently connected with Methodism in the Chester Circuit. There were six daughters, and the eldest, assisted by her sisters, commenced a grocery business in Eastgate Street, Chester. The sisters, their home and business, became prominent factors in connection with Methodism. One sister married the Rev. George Morley, who in 1830 was President of the Con-

ference ; a second became the wife of Dr. Warren, who in 1835 was the leader of the agitation ; a third, of the Rev. Joseph Roberts, who went out to Ceylon in 1818, where he laboured with great success for years, and was the general superintendent of the Methodist missions in the Madras District ; his too early death occurring in 1849. He was an author of considerable repute ; his work entitled *Oriental Illustrations of the Sacred Scriptures* in a short time reached a second edition, and was greatly admired. The eldest Miss Williams became the wife of J. Copner Williams of Denbigh ; another married Mr. Bearley of Ratcliffe ; and the sixth, Mr. Downes. The three sons were closely connected with the Methodist Society. The Rev. William Wilson (4th) married a daughter of Richard ; another daughter became the wife of Mr. David Parry of Denbigh, one of the most influential and devoted of local preachers. The devoted wife of the Rev. W. H. Taylor was a daughter of the Rev. George Morley. Little did the young man, who stood up for and nobly defended the doctrine of Christian perfection when so recklessly assailed by narrow-minded Antinomians, think that the influence of his home at Acre would be felt through such a bright succession of noble families to the ends of the earth. Samuel Williams, the younger son, carried on the business in Chester which had been commenced by his sisters ; while the second brother became a useful member of Society at Wrexham.

In the month of October 1798, John Bryan, a young man of considerable intelligence with a spark of genius, but who had lived a most reckless life, was engaged as an assistant at the grocery business in Westgate by the four sisters, the Williamses. The young man had been in the habit of spending his time in public-houses, singing, reciting, and composing comic songs in order to divert the idle and drunken crowd. When he came to the Williamses, he entered one of the most beautiful of Christian homes, whose inmates walked in the constant sunshine of God's presence, and experienced the true

happiness of ‘every child of grace.’ It was their meat and drink. They sang the sweet songs of Zion with the ecstasies of joy, with a tenderness and a pathos which filled the home with the beauty, fragrance, and glory of summer. All this was new to young Bryan, and so different to his past experience, he soon felt that he was absolutely out of harmony with such a home. He felt that he could not live there, and almost decided to leave them and go elsewhere. One evening in the first week of December 1798, the young man was in the house and the four sisters conversing freely about the blessedness of religion, the ‘ways of pleasantness,’ and the ‘paths of peace,’ with full hearts and radiant faces, and songs of praise. Bryan’s heart became heavy; he felt guilty, sad, and in great distress. Their songs were to him like the thunders of Sinai, in their voices he heard the voice of the Great Judge, and their joys fell upon him like salted fire. In due time they retired. He also went to his bedroom, but not to sleep. He felt the wrath of God upon him, and fell on his knees and began to pray in great agony; he was held in worse than iron chains by the consciousness of his guilt and the terrors of hell; he cried aloud for mercy. The four sisters and the two servants heard the noise, and came down to his door; thinking that he was in great pain, they entered his room, but soon discovered the agony of soul which pressed him down, and they prayed with him and shed tears with him as he cried for mercy. They explained to him the way of salvation, and after a while left him praying; shortly after the light broke in upon his soul, the burden rolled away, and he felt that the law of the gospel in Christ Jesus had delivered him from the law of sin and death, and there was peace like a river filling his soul. What a change! He could now understand and appreciate the happiness of the young women, and felt ready to bless the Lord that he had been brought to such a happy home. At first he identified himself with the Calvinistic Methodists, but soon discovered that his experience

was out of harmony with the higher Calvinism they preached. And struggling to hold on with them for six months he decided, after consultation with the pastor, to identify himself with the Wesleyans at the Octagon Chapel. George Morley, who was married to one of the sisters, was then a young minister on the Chester Circuit, with whom he frequently associated. Mr. Morley lent him Mr. Wesley's works, and assisted him in his studies. He soon became a most active worker in the Sunday school, prayer-meetings, and a faithful attendant at all the means of grace. A few months after, he was pressed by the ministers of the Circuit to begin to preach, and he made his first attempt at Rawton, about February 1800. When the April plan of that year was printed, John Bryan's name was on it. He frequently preached at Wrexham, Bersham, Northop, and other places in the neighbourhood. The hand of Providence in the conversion of this young man, his call to preach, and his marvellous work in connection with the introduction of Methodism into Wales, will ever be manifest, especially in North Wales. The Chester ministers assisted in various ways in the introduction of Welsh Wesleyan Methodism into the Principality. During that and the following year, Mr. Bryan continued a local preacher on the Chester plan, preaching with increasing power Sunday after Sunday. In 1801 he entered the ministry, and for a number of years displayed a courage, energy, smartness, usefulness, and devotion to Methodism rarely excelled in the Methodist Connexion.

Another family which became conspicuous in Chester was that of Alderman Bowers. Mr. Alderman Bowers had gone to North Wales, and was in the neighbourhood of Beaumaris when John Bryan was preaching there. He went to hear him, was deeply convinced of sin, and in great distress he called the next morning to see the preacher, anxiously inquiring the way of salvation. When Mr. Bowers called, Mr. Bryan was engaged at his toilet with his face lathered and his razor in his hand, but was obliged to go to open the door

of his house, where he found the alderman, who expressed to him his trouble. The Methodist preacher, ever ready to help the soul inquiring the way of salvation, lost sight of his toilet, and in an instant was on his knees supplicating the throne of the heavenly grace with his friend from Chester, who in that humble cottage found Christ. Mr. Bowers became a great power in Chester. When he was proposed for Mayor of that important city, the clergy and the opposite political party left no stone unturned to defeat his election; notwithstanding all opposition, however, he was elected. The Sunday after his election, he attended the cathedral. Bishop Law, brother of Lord Ellenborough, a bitter opponent of the Methodists, was the preacher, his text being ‘I say by the grace of God given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think.’ Mr. Bowers’s mayoralty was so distinguished and successful, that the bishop acknowledged that he had been misguided in forming the opinion he did with regard to the Methodists. The Chester Methodists were greatly encouraged, the work prospered, and the opposition gradually disappeared.

In 1811 the old Octagon Chapel was sold to Lady Huntingdon’s denomination. For years the venerable Richard Knill was its pastor, but more recently it passed into the hands of the Presbyterians. The same year (1811) the fine old chapel in John Street was erected at considerable cost, the trustees being Thomas Bowers, whose conversion we have previously referred to, George Walker, Matthew Harrison, Joseph Janion, Samuel Beckett, Richard Evans, Benjamin Davis, John Hitchings. In a short time after the opening of the new chapel, John Bowers began to preach, and at the age of seventeen he entered the ministry. He soon attracted considerable attention as a preacher, and maintained his popularity up to the end of a long and useful public life. He made the art of preaching a considerable study, devoted great pains to the preparation of his discourses, which were delivered in a

finished style, marked by graceful and effective elocution, and a power of declamation rarely excelled. In an age of great preachers, he ranked high, was elected governor of the Didsbury College, a position of great responsibility, and the duties of which he for twenty years discharged with fidelity, dignity, and efficiency. In 1858 he was elected to the Presidential Chair of the Wesleyan Conference, the greatest honour possible in the Methodist Church, and died in great peace at Southport in 1866.

Mr. Richard Harrison of Northop, who was converted under the preaching of Parson Greenwood the same month as Bradburn, in 1770, never entered the regular ministry, but itinerated a great deal, preaching and ministering to the poor with self-sacrificing devotion and consistency for more than half a century. Mr. Harrison felt greatly attached to Parson Greenwood, whose portrait he kept in a prominent place in his house, to remind him of the great blessing he had received through his instrumentality. Yielding to the earnest entreaties of Mr. John Oliver, the superintendent of the Chester Circuit, in 1772-73, he began to exhort, and soon became an accredited preacher on the Chester Circuit. He had some time before commenced a Society class, which was held in his own house. When Mr. Wesley visited Chester in 1774, Harrison, with other Methodists from the villages, went to hear the great preacher, and to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; and when Mr. Wesley said, 'The blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee,' and handed the cup to Mr. Harrison, it proved to him to be the electric wire which brought the divine blessing to his soul, and filled him with joy and love and God. He returned to his home with a burning zeal for the salvation of souls. He not only attended to all his appointments on the plan of the Chester Circuit, which in those days was wide, but he travelled from village to village on the borders of Cheshire, through the whole of the county of Flint, the Vale of Clwyd

and beyond, preaching on the highways and byways, in barns and cottages, wherever and whenever he had an opportunity, and, though often persecuted, was never cast down. Once he was preaching at Axton New Market on ‘the Lamb of God,’ when a dead lamb was thrown at him ; he took but little heed of the insult, but said with great effect, the ‘Lamb of God’ was slain, not for His own sake, but for the sake of others, and ‘liveth again’ ; which passage he emphasised with such great effect that the thoughtless became solemn, and many were blessed. The clergy preached at him, went themselves to put him down, sent their own servants ; reckless mobs, sometimes with kettles to make a noise, at other times with cruel weapons, with a determination to prevent him preaching—but all in vain. Like John Nelson, he felt the love of God in his heart, and, without fear of men, unhesitatingly proclaimed it with the conscientiousness of a conqueror. He was a weaver by trade, but as he gave nearly all his time to the service of the church, was never in affluent circumstances. After the introduction of Welsh Methodism into North Wales, where he had worked hard and long preparing the way, he rejoiced in its prosperity, and was greatly respected for his work’s sake by all. His tall, venerable figure, his flowing white hair, a long life of devoted service, and a beautiful character, caused him to be looked upon as a veritable bishop. A Methodist for over sixty years, and a preacher fifty-eight years, he died in 1830, in his eighty-seventh year, his loss lamented by all who recognized in him a burning and a shining light in a dark place, and the means of lighting the candle in many a home and village before the Conference sent missionaries into Wales.

The Chester Circuit included several Societies in North Wales. One of the earliest after those previously referred to was that at Wrexham. Thomas Olivers says that he was in the house of a Mr. Jones, ‘who was then a Methodist,’ long before his conversion, when he was an ungodly young man

living at Wrexham. Mr. Wesley makes no reference to this town, but there is a tradition that he preached from the window of a house which is now a shop in Town Hill. The chair which he is said to have used on that occasion is now in the preacher's vestry. The visit to Wrexham is not confirmed by any reference in his journal, but he frequently visited the neighbourhood, and there were many services which he conducted in the vicinity with regard to which the names of the places are not given. Wrexham, then an important town, would probably be one of them.

The first regular services in Wrexham were held in a room in Hughes's yard, Town Hill, some time prior to 1772. Samuel Bradburn preached in this room, probably his second attempt. It is thought that Owen Davies was converted in London, where he also began to preach. The little Society removed to Chapel Street, where they worshipped in a cottage. When Owen Davies and John Hughes were appointed by the Conference of 1800 to mission North Wales, the two preachers met at Wrexham. Mr. Davies preached on the 23rd August in that town, and Mr. Hughes, who was accompanied by Mr. Williams, Acre, went to Brymbo, taking the appointment of Mr. Mainwaring, who was a local preacher on the Chester plan. Mr. Davies saw the Chester ministers, and wanted to know what Societies they were willing to hand over to form the new mission, and they consented to give over all the Societies in Wales except Wrexham. In 1803 Wrexham was made the head of a Circuit. During the first three years the North Wales mission was included in the Chester District. In 1803 the North Wales District was formed, including four Circuits—Welshpool, Wrexham, Ruthin, and Curnarfon, Owen Davies being the chairman. The chapel was opened for public worship on the 1st of January 1805 by Samuel Bradburn, who was at that time one of the most popular preachers in the kingdom, and was known as the Green Chapel, George Lowe and Edward Linnell being the ministers,

the second living at Oswestry. In 1855 it was found necessary to take down the old Green Chapel, and to erect a larger one, on the Brynffynon field, the main road to the station, and which cost £1645, 18s. The ladies connected with the Society—Mrs. Edwards, Miss Meacock of Chester, Miss Darlington, Mrs. Gittins, Mrs. T. C. Jones, Mrs. Pryce Jones, Thomas, and others, were actively engaged in raising the money and paying off the debt. The Rev. Francis A. West preached the opening sermon. This chapel was the centre of good work for many years, but in 1889 was substituted by a much more costly and commodious structure, one which presents a bold and attractive appearance. Mr. E. Edwards rendered most valuable help in connection with the erection of this chapel. It was dedicated for divine worship by the President of the Conference, the Rev. C. H. Kelly, and, notwithstanding that it cost £6700, is free from debt. Small Societies were formed at Brymbo, Gresford, Bersham, Caergwrla, and Ruabon, and chapels erected at an early date and at various periods at Adwy, Cefnbychan, Jubilee, Acrefair, Llangollen, Crosslanes, and Hightown, where the gospel has been preached in the English language. In 1866 Oswestry was separated from Wrexham, and became the head of a new Circuit, and a good substantial and commodious chapel was erected shortly afterwards. In 1868 the Tarporley side was separated from Chester, and became a new Circuit. The Chester Circuit at the beginning of the present century covered the area of the four Circuits of the present day. There are now eight ministers, over a hundred local preachers, with 2263 members of Society, including juniors and those on trial, exclusive of those in the Welsh Societies.

We must now pause to consider the history of Welsh Methodism in the city of Chester. In 1815 Mr. Evan Jones, Rhuddlan, a zealous Wesleyan, came to reside in the city, and found several Welsh families who were struggling to worship with the English at St. John's, but longed for services in their native tongue. They asked and secured permission to

hold a prayer-meeting in the schoolroom connected with St. John's. The prayer-meeting was made a blessing; a class-meeting was formed, of which Mr. Jones, the draper, was the leader. Mr. Ellis Evans, a local preacher, came to reside in Chester, and he too assisted the work in various ways. The Society was included in the English Circuit for some time, and as the ministers were not able to preach in the Welsh language, they were under many disadvantages. They were often in difficulties to get preachers, and some of the English friends could not see the necessity of a Welsh Society at all. In 1822 they took a room in Boarding School Yard, and were transferred to the Holywell Welsh Circuit, the Rev. John Davies, the superintendent of that Circuit, taking considerable interest in the little Welsh Society. Fifteen months later they removed to a room in Shoemakers' Row, Northgate Street, where they continued to hold their services till they were able to build a chapel in 1827. During the years they had been worshipping in small rooms, notwithstanding the inconveniences, the faithful few had gathered strength, and their work was made a blessing to many. Evan Williams from Machynlleth, a very active local preacher, had come to Chester; and there were also John Peters, William Jones from Beaumaris, John Jones, and others. Mr. John Richards was intensely anxious to have a chapel, he agonised in prayer for light, and his conviction became so established that he felt it his duty to take steps towards building a chapel. A site was bought for £150 in Hamilton Place. John Richards, Evan Williams, Lewis Morgan, John Jones, John Peters, Thomas Davies, Robert Morris, Richard Evans, Richard Pugh, John Evans, Robert Roberts, Peter Williams, Thomas Jones, and Anne Jones, each lent, without interest, £10, and the other £10 was collected to pay for the land. During the erection of the chapel, these good people gave all they could, and begged all they could, to pay the workmen as they went on from week to week; and it was stated by John Richards at the jubilee meeting held at

Abergele,—a report of which was sent by the Rev. Richard Pritchard to the Eurgrawn for 1850,—that failing to find the money in time to pay the workmen, they pawned their watches in order to carry on the erection of the chapel. The self-sacrificing efforts of these good people were crowned with success. The chapel was completed, and in the month of August 1828 the opening services were held, the Rev. John Bowers, Joseph Rayner, Hugh Carter, and Thomas Thomas taking part. After finding a home for the ark, they found their reward in the success of the work, which, notwithstanding the migratory character of the Welsh people in English towns, continued to prosper. In 1850 it was found necessary to build a new chapel, which was opened for public worship on March 18 and 19, the Revs. Thomas Aubrey, John L. Richards, John Richards, and Lot Hughes being the preachers who conducted the services. The Chester Society, after the division of the Holywell, was included in the Mold Circuit, but for some years has been with Bagillt, where the second minister of that Circuit has resided. In 1884 a beautiful new chapel was erected in Queen Street, which is everything that could be desired, to carry on the work among the Welsh inhabitants of the city, and in which meets regularly a very intelligent, united, and exemplary body of Christians. They have had in their midst a few families of conspicuous zeal and devotion to the Wesleyan Church. Mr. Thomas Davies, father of Mr. Councillor Robert Davies, was a tower of strength to the little Welsh Society for many years. A most diligent worker, class-leader, and for many years a Circuit steward, Mr. Davies stood by the Llanergain Chapel in its hour of need, in connection with which he spent a great deal of money, prevented a Connexional scandal and the destruction of the Society in the place, and by the co-operation of the Rev. Richard Pritchard and the ministers in the North Wales District, the case was satisfactorily completed. Mr. David Williams (Dewi ab Robert) was for

many years a local preacher, a good theologian, and a poet of no mean order. There were many others, like John Richards and William Jones, who gave themselves entirely to the service of Christ in connection with the Wesleyan Society at Hamilton Place.

Methodism has not remained stationary in Chester. In 1871 the City Road Chapel was erected and two mission rooms. St. John's and the Welsh chapel in Queen Street, and the above, comprise the accommodation provided by the Wesleyan Methodists of Chester. There are still representatives of the good old families connected with Methodism. The names of Messrs. H. and J. Bowers are highly respected and influential in the city and throughout the Methodist Connexion, and are worthy of the best traditions of that honoured name. The name of Beckett is as powerful as ever, and in Mr. W. T. Davies there is a worthy representative of the Rev. Samuel Davies (1st), whose powerful preaching contributed so largely towards making the adjoining county a stronghold of Wesleyan Methodism. Other names will long live, and be sacredly cherished by the Methodists of Chester for years to come. The Methodists began their work in a storm of persecution, but the healing hand of gentle Time is so manifest that to-day no grief is felt. The present danger of Methodism is respectability, not persecution.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE INTRODUCTION OF WELSH WESLEYAN METHODISM INTO THE PRINCIPALITY.

Jones, Bathafarn—Oldham Street, Manchester—Returning Home—Holding Services at Ruthin—Great Strain—Despondency—Letter from Conference—Owen Davies and J. Hughes—First Members of Society—Societies formed—Bryan—Jones, Bathafarn—John Maurice and John Jones enter the Ministry—North Wales District formed—New Circuits—William Jones—Robert Roberts—Edward Jones—Missions in South Wales—Griffith Owen—J. Williams (1st)—Edward Jones (3rd)—W. Batten—William Hughes—Hugh Carter—William Davies, Africa—David Rogers—Griffith Hughes—William Evans—Robert Humphreys—Circuits formed—Chapels erected—Edward Edwards—John Davies—Evan Parry—David Jones, Beddgelert—J. Rogers—Evan Hughes—Hugh Hughes—Samuel Davies (1st)—Evan Edwards—Robert Jones—New Circuits—Great Prosperity—Edward Anwyl—Edward Jones (4th)—David Jones, Eglwysfach—Lot Hughes—Thomas Thomas—O. Jones—J. Williams (2nd)—O. Rees—The Eurgrawn published—William Davies (2nd)—Humphrey Jones—John Williams (3rd)—Owen Thomas—David Williams—Lewis Jones—David Evans (1st)—Robert Owen—Morgan Griffith—Richard Bonner—Chapels—Members—Prosperity—Dr. Rees and Wesleyan Preachers—Death of Dr. Coke—The disastrous Effects in Villages, etc.

ON a Sunday evening about the end of 1795 or the beginning of 1796, the Rev. George Marsden, then a young man of prepossessing appearance, intensely in earnest, was preaching in the Oldham Street Chapel, Manchester. The service was one of great power, and eminently successful. In the inquiry room several young men pleaded for mercy. In that room, amid the sound of exhortation, prayers, cries, and tears, were also heard the first muttering of praise from those who had found Christ. Amongst others, there was a young man of gentlemanly appearance, timid, pale-faced, who stood up and



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with a radiant smile, which came through tears and sobs like a ray of sunshine pressing its way through clouds and mists, began in a tender, pathetic, and penetrative voice, prompted by a full heart, to sing, ‘ My God is reconciled, His pardoning voice I hear ’; and that convert was Edward Jones, a young Welshman, the son of a well-to-do farmer, who was living at Bathafarn, near Ruthin, in the beautiful Vale of Clwyd. Why the Bathafarn farmer allowed his son, or the young man himself should have thought of living in smoky Manchester and becoming a cotton-spinner, was, humanly speaking, a great mystery ; but as Dr. William Davies so well said, it was the Lord of Hosts who guided Abraham out of the land of Ur, and took Joseph by the hand to Egypt through bondage to liberty, and from prison life to the throne, who was leading the young gentleman farmer in a way which he knew not then, but fully understood in after years. The prayers of Wesley, Coke, and many others on behalf of Wales had come before the Lord, and the time, ‘ yea, the set time,’ had come when a full, free, and present salvation was to be offered to the Welsh people in their own native tongue. The same night and in the same inquiry room were Jabez Bunting, James Wood, John Jones of Rochdale, and others, who reached eminent positions in the Church of their choice. These young men were called to join a band of workers, and they did most efficient service. In 1799 Jabez Bunting entered the ministry, and his loss was greatly felt by the other workers. Edward Jones was very happy in his work, and his one desire was to live and work for Christ. Oldham Street Chapel and the workers there were very dear to him. The sad intelligence of his elder brother’s death, the feebleness and gradual decay of his parents’ health, made a deep impression on his mind, and withal his own health was failing him. Under the circumstances, strengthened by the best medical advice, he was obliged, to his great regret, to return to his old home. It was a trial to leave Manchester, with

all its religious advantages and his friends in the chapel, who had become more to him than any earthly relationship. To Wales, however, Providence pointed out to him most clearly he must go. The Rev. Samuel Bradburn was the superintendent of the Manchester Circuit with whom he consulted. His great trouble was the fact that in North Wales there were no Wesleyan Societies, and to live without the means of grace in a Methodist chapel seemed to him almost an impossibility. Mr. Bradburn advised him to see the Rev. Thomas Hutton, who was then the superintendent of the Chester Circuit. Acting upon that advice, he called upon Mr. Hutton, and secured from him a promise of help from that city. While Mr. Jones was in Chester he heard of a young man of similar feelings, who lived in the city, and was about to begin to preach. That young man was John Bryan. He called to see him, and they became confidential friends. The couple who met that day in the old city of Chester were about to be called to a great work. Mr. Jones reached Ruthin the last day in 1799. On or before the 3rd of January 1800 he had taken a large room of John Edwards, the carrier, in which to hold Wesleyan services. Shortly after this the Rev. James Ridall, one of the Chester ministers, came to Ruthin, and preached to a good congregation. The Chester Circuit was very wide, in addition to a large portion of Cheshire; with all the Societies formed on the borders of Wales as far as Oswestry, it would be impossible to visit Ruthin very often. Mr. Jones soon discovered that if the work was to prosper, the services must be conducted in the vernacular, and that there were other good men within a few miles who would assist him in his noble efforts. Richard Harrison of Northop, in the Chester Circuit, had been converted about the same time as Samuel Bradburn, and for many years had been preaching in season and out of season. There were also Evan Roberts of Denbigh (who had been converted under one of the English preachers) and Mr.

Edward Linnell of Llansanan, the son of a Methodist minister, and John Bryan of Chester. John Bryan began to preach the following February, and in April he preached at Ruthin. On that memorable Sunday several of the young men who had been recently converted went three miles outside the town to meet the young preacher. Entering the town they began to sing, ‘Let heaven and earth agree,’ which attracted a large crowd of people to hear them sing, and followed them to the preaching room. The services during the day were made a great blessing to many souls. Mr. Bryan was a bilingual preacher, which proved a great advantage. Many decided to follow Christ that day, and identified themselves with the Methodist Society at Ruthin. The son of Bathafarn became the topic of conversation throughout the valley. The work greatly prospered at Ruthin, and small Societies were formed at Denbigh and elsewhere in the Vale of Clwyd. Mr. Edward Jones was active and useful; at times, however, he longed for the ‘green pastures’ of Oldham Street. For him it was a time of great trial. There were heavy financial responsibilities, constant persecutions from friends, and particularly his own family, who were greatly annoyed because he had become a Methodist, a sect which hitherto had not had a foothold amongst the Welsh people; and in addition to all these things, his health was not good. He was afraid of himself, and at times became greatly depressed. In the month of August 1800 he felt very despondent, and wished to die, as the only escape out of all his troubles. One day, while in this unhappy state, he left Bathafarn house and slowly climbed the mountain with the view of looking once more towards Manchester, and then to pray to God to take him to himself. After he had ascended a considerable part of the mountain, he heard a voice from behind. It was his father’s servant, asking him to return home. Fearing that some calamity was about to happen, he returned home with all speed, to find a letter awaiting

him. Breaking the seal, he read with a trembling hand and an agitated mind, but before he read far down the letter, his burden fell off, his despondency gave way to a feeling of gratitude, and his fears took their flight; his face began to beam with brightness, and his whole soul was transfigured. It was a letter from the Rev. Owen Davies, informing him that the Conference had appointed the Rev. John Hughes and himself to form a mission in North Wales, with Ruthin as the centre. This was enough. After such news life was worth living. The Conference had just met in London; James Wood, who in his earlier years had travelled in Wales, was president; and Samuel Bradburn, who had preached his first sermon not many miles from Ruthin, was secretary of the Conference. Dr. Coke, who had been detained in Ireland in consequence of stormy weather, had failed to reach London before the stations had been confirmed. The application for Welsh preachers had been under the consideration of Conference, but in the absence of Dr. Coke nothing had been done, and he on his arrival in the Conference, notwithstanding the confirmation of the stations, contended for the establishment of a mission in North Wales. John Gaulter, William Jenkins, and others supported the application. Ruthin was made the head of a new Circuit, and Owen Davies, a native of Wrexham, who had been appointed to the Redruth Circuit, and John Hughes of Brecon, who had been put down for Leek, in Staffordshire, were set apart for the Welsh mission. The letter with such information to Mr. Jones satisfied the one earnest desire of his soul.

On Thursday, August 27, 1800, the Revs. Owen Davies and John Hughes arrived at Ruthin. Owen Davies was born at Wrexham in 1752; he was converted in London, joined the Society at Brentford, and made his first attempt to preach at Mile End. He was at an early age impressed by the preaching at Wrexham of Mr. John Gardner, a local

preacher living at Chester, and felt disposed to identify himself with the Methodists in his native town; but his father would not tolerate the idea, and actually prohibited him attending a Methodist service. Some time after his conversion he was asked by Mr. Wesley to become a travelling preacher. Being a married man, for some time he hesitated, but finally yielded. His ministry in Cornwall had been greatly blessed, where he held the superintendency of the Penzance and Redruth Circuits, and also the responsible position of chairman of that District. Mr. Davies was not able to preach in the vernacular, although he could with some difficulty converse in his native tongue. This was a great disadvantage to him, and also to Wesleyanism. He was, however, a wise, able, and pious man, and did good service for Methodism in the Principality. He wrote several pamphlets in defence of its doctrine and discipline, and for sixteen years was the successful chairman of the District. We have previously referred to the early life of John Hughes. These were the pioneers of Welsh Methodism in the Principality. They were the best men available, but, humanly speaking, the prospect was not very promising—Mr. Davies not able to preach in the Welsh language, and John Hughes, although a good Welsh scholar and a very able man, but his deliberate utterance and lack of fire rendered his preaching less attractive to the Welsh people.

There were in Wales at the time some eminent preachers—Robert Roberts of Clynnog, Christmas Evans, John Elias, Ebenezer Richard, Jones (Llangan), and others, who had secured the confidence of the people, and were very popular. The appearance of Owen Davies, his family and colleague, at Ruthin, created a great deal of curiosity and gossip. The new religion (*y grefydd newydd*) as it was called was the one burning question throughout the valley. The son of Bathafarn was held responsible for bringing it there, and by many severely condemned, ridiculed by others, though a few

gave him credit for it. Many of the inhabitants fearlessly denounced the new religion as a plague, a curse, which they would have to watch like poison and stamp out of the country if possible. Some asked questions, and were willing to consider the answers; a few, very few comparatively, accepted the message gladly. The reply given to inquirers regarding the Wesleyan doctrine was that it taught that Christ had died for all, and that 'every man might be saved.' The new religion attracted attention. Many were led to read their Bibles, and not a few prompted to hear the preachers for themselves. The preachers did not confine themselves to one locality, but from town to town, from village to village, they travelled, preaching to all universal salvation by faith in Christ. And the answer came, 'not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.'

Mr. Wesley and his preachers had frequently preached in various places in the Principality. In South Wales several Circuits had been formed, while on the borders of North Wales a few small English Societies had been established. The Welsh-speaking population had scarcely been touched, but there were a few who had heard the Methodist preachers, believed the doctrines, and longed for a Methodist Society. Messrs. Davies and Hughes found in these men willing workers. At Ruthin, Jones (Bathafarn) was the first class-leader, and Evan Roberts was the first leader at Denbigh. The first six members meeting in class at Ruthin were Edward Jones; Edward Linnell of Llansanan, an excise officer, and the son of a Methodist preacher; Evan Roberts of Denbigh; William Jones, The Orchard, and his wife; and Elizabeth Foulkes. These were the few names in Ruthin. The first public work of the two Methodist preachers after a night's rest was to preach within the prison cell to a poor woman who was there waiting her execution, to whom they were made a blessing.

During the first year they formed Societies at Denbigh, St. Asaph, Tremeirchion, Holywell, Northop, Mold, Llanarmon, Llanfair, and a few smaller ones in addition to that of Ruthin. The work prospered. Prior to the coming of the missionaries to Ruthin, Jones (Bathafarn), who had begun the work and taken the old carrier's loft, frequently without a preacher, had been compelled to conduct the service himself, and, so far as we know, without any intention on his part had developed into a very acceptable preacher. John Bryan, whose conversion at Chester we have previously referred to, had become a most successful preacher. Bryan was born at Llanfyllin, in the county of Montgomery, in the year 1770. His parents removed to Oswestry, from which place he went to Shrewsbury, thence to Corwen, then to Bala, afterwards to Wrexham, and finally to Chester. We have no knowledge as to his occupation till we find him at Bala, engaged as a lawyer's clerk. He was a restless, fast young man; active and attractive at public-houses, fairs, and dances; a young man of considerable ability, with a spark of poetic genius, impulsive, enthusiastic, whole-hearted in everything he took up. He was, of course, very popular and in constant request at places of amusement; a good reader and mimic, a ready wit, and in those days considered a good scholar. At times he was under religious impressions, but was able to find comfort in the midst of his sins from the fact, as he had been taught, that if predestinated to salvation, the effective call would come, and all would end well. His removal to Chester was the turning-point in his life, for here he was converted and began to preach. His preaching was owned of God, and the Conference of 1801, held at Leeds, appointed him to the ministry to labour with Owen Davies and John Hughes on the North Wales Circuit. This was a wise arrangement. Bryan was a bi-linguist, had all the qualifications of an attractive preacher in the vernacular, and his zeal, fire, courage, and enthusiasm for the

salvation of souls strengthened the missionaries in their weakest point. Owen Davies was an able administrator, theologian, and preacher in the English language; John Hughes was an eminent scholar and theologian; John Bryan had popular gifts,—so they worked well together, each in his own sphere. The Ruthin Circuit was enlarged; Wrexham, Bangor-isgoed, Bersham, Caergwrla, and Brymbo were taken over from the Chester Circuit; regular preaching was established at Llangollen, Llandegle, Bryneglwys, and several visits to various places in the counties of Flint and Montgomery were made, during each of which services had been held. It is difficult to ascertain the strength of the Societies numerically for the first year, as the members were included with those of the Ludlow mission, the total membership being 282. The following year (1802), Jones (Bathafarn), John Maurice of Llanfair, and John Jones (Corwen) were added to the staff of travelling preachers. Jones (Bathafarn) was a plain, practical, pathetic preacher, never aiming at anything great, but ever living on Mount Zion in the sweet sunshine of God's presence. He had a pleasant address, a tender voice, gentlemanly and winning manners, with the halo of a holy life, the still small voice of which melted the hearts of his hearers. His ministry was successful in leading many souls to Christ wherever he went. He rarely ever approached Sinai—his gospel of love could not thrive in the soil of the burning mountain, and its smoky, thundering atmosphere. He lived under the shadows of the Cross and the melting sunshine of the exalted Saviour's throne. His prosperity was marvellous; he could not shake a multitude like some of the Welsh preachers, but during his stay in the Welsh work there was a soul-winning influence accompanying his preaching second to none; his converts were found in almost every Society, his influence manifested on every position in the Church throughout Wales; while to Wesleyan Methodism in the Principality he was a true apostle. John Maurice, a

relative of Jones of Bathafarn, on the other hand, was a son of thunder, a popular and successful preacher. After eleven years of active service he retired from the itinerancy, but for many years before his death was a very useful local preacher at Dyserth. He died at the Denbigh Infirmary, February 1, 1842. John Jones was the first of the Welsh Wesleyan converts who entered the ministry, being sent to the English work in 1817. He died at Hornsea, April 3, 1851. His ministry was made a great blessing to believers; he was strong in discipline and wise in administration.

In the following year (1803) the North Wales District was formed. It included four Circuits. Ruthin was divided into three—Ruthin, Carnarvon, and Wrexham—and Welshpool was the fourth Circuit included. Owen Davies was the chairman of the District. Three additional ministers were appointed that year—William Jones (Llanelidan), Thomas Roberts, and his brother Robert Roberts, near Corwen. William Jones left the ministry in 1816. Thomas Roberts's health failed him; Robert Roberts was one of the first editors and a powerful preacher. He died at Carnarvon, January 16, 1818. In 1804 two new Circuits were formed, viz., Denbigh and Beaumaris, the Conference appointing three new men to the ministry, in addition to those in the work. Edward Jones (2nd) was from Corwen; his health failed him in 1815, and he became supernumerary. He died at Faenol-fawr, St. Asaph, April 15, 1838. He was a good preacher, but a man of very nervous temperament. William Batten of Denbigh became one of the strong pillars of the Church, and filled the office of chairman of the District for four years. He died at Llansantffraid, Montgomeryshire, September 1, 1864, after being sixty-one years in the ministry. His zeal, diligence, and enthusiasm, the chief characteristics of his ministry, were attended with considerable success. Stephen Games had been in the English work, and was transferred to the Welsh work the same year.

During the first thirteen years, Owen Davies and his colleagues, notwithstanding opposition and difficulties of every description, had carried the glad tidings of ‘a Saviour for all’ to nearly every village and hamlet in North Wales. The chairman of the District, writing to Dr. Coke, remarks ‘that in nothing was the hand of Providence more manifest than in the raising up of men so eminently qualified for the work of the ministry.’ And to the thoughtful nothing could be more convincing. In three years half a score of men were raised up owned of God, who attracted the attention and admiration of their fellow-men throughout the Principality. The first chapel was erected at Denbigh; the following year Ruthin, Llanfair, Tremeirchion, Capel-y-ddol in the Llanfyllin Circuit, and Llanidloes Chapels were erected. The third year chapels were built at Mold and Hirwain, in the Vale of Clwyd.

In 1805 the Welsh work was commenced in South Wales, and it prospered so rapidly that the Conference appointed nine additional ministers that year to carry on the work in the Principality. One of these was John Williams, a native of Llanrwst, a good theologian, who prepared a most useful book for the Sunday scholars—a theological catechism, which for many years was used in most of the Welsh Sunday schools. He had some poetical genius. He is said to be the author of some of the hymns in the Welsh Hymn-book. An old leader in the Aberystwyth Circuit told the present writer that Mr. Williams had composed hymn No. 393 in the Welsh Hymn-book while on his way to an appointment at Ystumtuen on a Sunday morning. He was chairman of the District in 1819–20; he retired from the ministry in 1834, but continued a local preacher in the Carmarthen Circuit up to the time of his death. Edward Jones (3rd) of Llandysilio, near Llangollen, remained in the work till 1848, and was for seven years the editor of the Eurgrawn. He was a profound theologian, and one of the most fearless,

courageous, and powerful defenders of Methodist doctrine in the Welsh ministry. He was hated by many of the Calvinists, who in later years gave him the name of ‘Grey-headed Satan.’ He was an able preacher and a hard worker. He died at Llanidloes, July 22, 1855. William Hughes from Denbigh, who spent a long and useful life in the work, and died at Llecheyd, near Cardigan, November 12, 1861, in the eightieth year of his age, was a very able preacher of the gospel; his sparkling wit made the company present, at the house or near him at the District meeting, most lively with his droll sayings. When a supernumerary at Cardigan, there was a District meeting held there, and Mr. Farrar, the president, knowing him well, asked him if he would like to take a Circuit again, to which he replied in the negative. ‘But you look well in the face, Mr. Hughes,’ said the president. ‘Yes, Mr. President, but I can’t walk on my face, sir. O—o—oh !’ replied Mr. Hughes. Among the other pioneers were Hugh Carter of Denbigh, to whom we have referred previously, and William Davies of the Vale of Clwyd, who in after years was known as Davies (Africa), and who for years was a burning and a shining light. In 1815 he was appointed to Sierra Leone, Western Africa, where he remained for three years, and where he buried his wife. After his return, he travelled in the Penzance Circuit, and then returned to the Welsh work. For five years he was chairman of the District; he finally retired from the ministry in 1846, and died at Kidwelly. For many years he was one of the most successful ministers in the Welsh work, but after his return from Africa he suffered from the effects of the malaria fever, which proved a burden as long as he lived. David Rogers of Llanfair, in the Vale of Clwyd, was a man of superior talents, perhaps the ablest preacher among the first group of Wesleyans in Wales; a man of considerable penetration, quick perception, wide capacity, logical—altogether a well-balanced mind. As a speaker, he had a full

and pleasant voice, his discourses being fluent, natural, earnest, and lively. He often carried away the crowds in the large gatherings in the open air at will, and swayed them like a field of corn before the fresh breeze. He was a fearless defender of Methodist doctrines, and when editor of the *Eurgrawn* in 1812 and 1813 he criticised the writings of Dr. Lewis and Charles of Bala, and utterly demolished their higher Calvinism. He was elected chairman of the District three years in succession. In 1819 he went over to the English work, and died at Darlington, January 1824. He was conspicuous for his godliness, his great power in prayer, his holy life and happy death. Griffith Hughes of Llanor, near Pwllheli, who became a powerful preacher, had a fine voice and memory, a powerful imagination, and withal a good address. He was apt in his illustration, and often taxed nature and art in order to explain and enforce his views. He was for many years one of the most zealous of temperance reformers in the Principality. He died at Cefnmawr, August 31, 1864, where he was greatly esteemed, the vicar of the parish preaching a funeral sermon. William Evans of Amlwch, to whom we have previously referred, was the eighth, and Robert Humphreys of Llanelidan the ninth. Mr. Humphreys was more cultivated than many of his brethren, an abler scholar, endowed with some poetic talent, and a most devoted worker. We have heard of his wading through water three feet deep, rather than disappoint a small congregation. He was very successful in his ministry, but was cut down by cholera at Beaumaris, August 1832, in the fifty-third year of his age. ‘His zeal,’ says the Rev. John Jones (*Humilis*), ‘was a constant flame. He was one of the most honest and fearless of men, a burning and a shining light.’ Here was, it must be admitted, a group of marvellous men. The fact that a mission which had only been in existence for five years could produce such leaders in one year, is a demonstration as to the reality of the work and of

the divine blessing resting upon it. During the two years 1804 and 1805 twenty new chapels were erected, and the membership had reached the large total of 2532. Dr. Smith, referring to this period, says, ‘The rapid increase of Welsh preachers was indeed very remarkable, yet not sufficient to keep pace with the cry for the gospel in that language.’ Mr. Owen Davies declared the success which attended these labours to be most extensive, both in the conversion of sinners and in the edification of believers, so much so that demands for increased accommodation became general. Mr. Davies, in the communication referred to, mentions that a friend at Pwllheli had just bought ground to build a chapel, for which £60 had been given, and that he himself had given £100 for another plot at Carnarvon, and had since begged £60 towards paying for it. Sunday schools had been opened in connection with the various Societies, and Mr. John Hughes had prepared a Welsh hymn-book, which, notwithstanding the fact that many of the hymns were translated, and the short time given to preparation, was a creditable production, and was made a blessing to many. The majority of the Welsh hymns were at this time tinged with Calvinism, and of this doctrine they had to be purged before Mr. Hughes could utilize them.

In 1806 there were four new Circuits formed, viz., Llangollen, Pwllheli, Dolgelly, and Machynlleth, and four new ministers called out by Conference—Edward Edwards, who only remained in the work for three years; John Davies, to whose worth and work we have frequently referred; his friend Evan Parry, who died at Swansea; and Morris Jones of Llangollen, who retired in 1818. Mr. John Hughes was transferred this year to an English Circuit. The reasons for the change were briefly these: There were some ministers present at the Conference who thought Mr. Hughes should be elected to the chairmanship of the Welsh District. This view

was supported by Dr. Clarke, the president, Richard Reece, and others, and he was elected. Dr. Coke contended for the reappointment of Owen Davies; this was supported by the Welsh ministers themselves. Mr. Hughes, after consultation with and at the suggestion of some of the leading men, asked for an appointment to an English Circuit, and he was appointed to Dewsbury. The increase in the membership was 1271 during that year, and fifteen new chapels were opened for divine worship. In 1807 one new Circuit was formed, that of Llanidloes. Mr. Games retired from the ministry this year, and settled down at Denbigh, where he continued an active and useful Methodist up to the time of his death. Seven additional ministers were appointed by Conference this year. In this batch were David Jones (Beddgelert), John Rogers, Evan Hughes, Hugh Hughes, Samuel Davies, Evan Edwards, Robert Jones of Llanerchmedd, and Thomas Roberts (Bangor). David Jones was a sweet singer and a most effective preacher, who drew the multitude whenever and wherever he preached. On his marriage he retired and entered business, but after four years at Bridgend, he re-entered the ministry, and died at Liverpool, January 4, 1830. He was greatly beloved by his brethren, and, in addition to a goodly number of Welsh ministers present at his funeral, Dr. Newton, John Scott, John Bowers, and others, followed his mortal remains to their last resting-place. John Rogers was a native of Rhiwabon, who, after nine years of acceptable service in the Welsh, was transferred to the English work, and he died at Barnstaple, April 14, 1849, being sixty-nine years of age. Mr. Samuel Davies (1st) was a native of Cilcain, near Mold; he was in many respects the strongest and most successful defender of Methodist doctrine. His sermons were ever full of doctrine, and his writings did more to turn back the tide of Calvinism than those of any other Wesleyan minister. His voice was husky, but his matter was so clear and so ably treated that he carried conviction with every sentence. He was like one

dwelling in the light. He would bring so much thought into one sentence, and put that so transparently clear, that his preaching seemed most conclusive, and often his opponents, contrary to their desires, were compelled in their hearts to agree with him. Hugh Hughes, Evan Hughes, and Evan Edwards we have noticed elsewhere. Thomas Roberts, after two years, retired from the work of the ministry, and Robert Jones rendered efficient services for eighteen years as a travelling preacher. The total increase of membership this year (1807) was 425, and five new chapels were opened. In the year 1808 there was a rearrangement of Circuits; Wrexham and Welshpool were transferred to a new District called the Shrewsbury District, and the Welsh Circuits were all, with the exception of Caerphilly and Crughowell, included in what was known as the North Wales District. Four new Circuits were formed, viz., Llandilo and Lampeter, and the two mentioned above. Nine additional travelling preachers were appointed to the Welsh Circuits, viz., Edward Anwyl, Edward Jones (4th), David Jones (Eglwysfach), James James (Llangwyryfon), Lot Hughes, Thomas Thomas, Owen Jones, John Williams (2nd), Owen Rees, and William Jones. Edward Anwyl was elected chairman of the North Wales District for sixteen years in succession, and, needless to say, he was one of the most diligent, consistent, hard-headed of Methodist preachers. ‘One of the best historians in the Principality,’ said Mr. Humilis Jones; ‘a man of wide and extensive knowledge and never-failing common-sense; a preacher of considerable merit, one of the ablest of missionary speakers, and of great resource.’ He was greatly beloved by his brethren, and was very successful in his work. While a young man he went to the Llandaff Fair. He stood up on a chair near a number of mountebanks who were then performing in the presence of a large crowd, attracted the attention of a great crowd, and preached Christ to the people. He died at Holywell, January 23, 1837, being

seventy years of age. Edward Jones (4th), Llanasa, went to the English work in 1819, and died triumphantly in 1821. We have previously referred to David Jones (Eglwys-fach), and Owen Rees. Lot Hughes of Abergele, during a long course of labour, was eminently useful in winning souls to Christ, always proving himself to be a wise, painstaking superintendent, and a most diligent pastor. He was remarkably methodical and punctual in the discharge of his ministerial duties, devoted much attention to the history of the rise and progress of Wesleyan Methodism in the Principality, and published the results of his inquiries in the magazine (*Eurgrawn*). He died at Chester, July 13, 1873, in the eighty-seventh year of his age and the sixty-fifth of his ministry. Thomas Thomas of Dolgelly laboured hard to cultivate his mind, and attained a position of influence in the District. He was broad in his views on the great doctrines of Christianity; many of his sermons on difficult subjects were masterpieces of workmanship, and they were delivered with force and effect. Rev. John Jones (Humlis) said that many of his sermons were among the best he had ever heard. He died at Barmouth, April 16, 1846, in the sixty-first year of his age. Owen Jones of Llechfraith, near Barmouth, was one of the first-fruits of the Wesleyan mission in the county of Merioneth. He was a good man, a diligent pastor, and for thirty-five years faithfully discharged the duties of a Wesleyan minister. He died July 27, 1843, aged sixty-four. James James retired from the ministry in 1812, John Williams in 1814, and William Jones in 1816. The latter, who lived for many years in Chester, continued to preach occasionally as a local preacher. Twenty-two new chapels were opened for divine service during the year 1808; the net increase of membership was 1040. It will be seen the steady march of prosperity continued.

In 1809 the Welsh Circuits were all included in one District. Four new Circuits were formed—Neath and Car-

marthen in the south, and Llanfyllin and Holyhead in the north. The name of Llanrwst appears on the minutes in the place of Llangollen. The Welsh magazine called the Eurgrawn was published this year for the first time. This was a great undertaking, especially bearing in mind that all the previous attempts of Charles of Bala, Gomer, and other eminent men had been failures, and that the Wesleyans were comparatively weak, numerically and financially, were inexperienced in literary work, and had only so recently come on the ground. The effort, however, was made, and it succeeded. The late Dr. Thomas Rees was obliged to admit that the Wesleyans had taught other denominations how to publish and keep alive periodical literature. Every month, from the first issue in 1809 up to the present date, the Eurgrawn has been giving to the Welsh people its rich golden grain. It is the oldest of Welsh periodicals, and from the beginning it has maintained a foremost place among its contemporaries. The Conference that year sanctioned the appointment of six additional travelling preachers. John Jones (2nd) of Amlwch, who was converted during the first visit of the Wesleyan preachers to his native town; he identified himself with the Methodists, was made a class-leader, and ere long began to preach. He was a faithful, humble-minded, plodding, zealous worker; a careful superintendent, and a successful Methodist preacher. He was a great sufferer during his later years, but the strength of his inner life was made manifest in his beautiful resignation to the divine will. He died in peace at Chester, September 17, 1854, aged seventy-three.

William Davies (2nd) of Llanfyllin entered the English work in 1818, and died in the Brecon Circuit in 1869, ripe for heaven. Robert Jones (2nd) of Llanfyllin identified himself with the Methodists at Newtown, and after seventeen years of faithful service as a travelling preacher, died suddenly at Amlwch, July 26, 1826, in the fortieth year of his age.

Humphrey Jones of Penual, Machynlleth, was in the full work of the ministry for twenty-nine years. A minister of deep piety, greatly beloved, but of a melancholy tendency at times, he died at Llanfyllin in 1838, being fifty-five years of age. We have referred to the ability and work of John Williams (3rd) (afterwards 2nd) elsewhere. Owen Thomas retired from the ministry in 1822, but continued an active local preacher and leader at Holyhead for many years, where he died in 1847. There was a decrease of 179 in the number of members this year, though seven new chapels were opened for divine worship. The success of the work was becoming the great embarrassment. There were now forty-four ministers in the Welsh work, and seventy-six chapels, with 4989 full and accredited members of Society. The wisdom and care of the respected chairman was a great blessing to the mission. In 1810 four new Circuits were formed—Merthyr Tydfil, Brecon, and Cardigan in the south and Pwllheli in the north. The name of Crughowell is missed. Five young men were called out to the ministry. David Williams of Llanfair, Anglesea, who became one of the princes of the Welsh pulpit. He delighted to grapple with the great doctrines of the gospel, which he thoroughly mastered, and delivered his views with force and authority. He died at Liverpool, June 24, 1862, aged seventy-seven. There were also Peter Pierce of Liverpool and Lewis Jones of Llanegryn. The latter died at Llangollen, November 1830, an upright, fearless, and unflinching defender of right, purity, and of the Church of his choice. If not brilliant, he was a useful Methodist preacher. To David Evans of Talyssarn, Cardiganshire, we have referred elsewhere. Stephen Parry (the 5th) was a native of Llanilar, Aberystwyth, who in 1813 retired from the work of the ministry. Sixteen chapels were opened during the year, and there was an increase of 560 in the membership.

In 1811 one new Circuit, viz., Holywell, was formed, and

two additional travelling preachers were appointed. Robert Owen of Llysfaen, Abergale, who died at Aberayron, August 3, 1875, aged ninety-four, was one of these. He was a minister of beautiful spirit, life, and influence. A fine, handsome, gentlemanly man, greatly beloved by all who knew him, a devoted pastor, whose long life was one of growing attachment to Methodism. After he became supernumerary he was chiefly instrumental in beginning the Wesleyan Society at Aberayron, where he spent the last twenty-five years of his life. The other new minister was Morgan Griffith of Dolgelly, who died at Aberayron, August 6, 1868, in the eighty-eighth year of his age. He was a man of good understanding, sound judgment, and consistent life ; but his health failed him in 1840, and he was obliged to become supernumerary. The increase in the membership this year was 151, and two new chapels were opened for divine worship. In the year 1814 Richard Bonner was called to the work of the ministry, but with that solitary exception not a single candidate was accepted for the Welsh work for many years. This was the highest point reached for a considerable period, —forty-eight ministers, twenty-one Circuits, about a hundred chapels, 5700 members of Society, with scores of promising Societies all over the Principality. Dr. Rees, in his *History of Nonconformity*, says :—

‘ There is not perhaps in the history of religion in any country, at least there is not in the history of religion in Wales, any instance of such rapid success attending the labours of men without anything extraordinary in their talents or positions, as that which attended the labours of the founders of Wesleyan Methodism in Wales. Having only begun their work in 1800, before the end of 1810 the travelling preachers were forty in number ; the Societies which they had formed, 400 ; the members between five and six thousand ; and they had built no less than eighty new chapels in nine years. This remarkable success may be in part accounted for by the fact that the preachers at the

outset were favoured by a degree of opposition from Churchmen and Dissenters of all sects, except the Arians and Quakers. Opposition, when not carried to the extreme of violent persecution, is always much more advantageous to a cause than silent contempt. Had they been left unnoticed and unopposed by all parties, it is not probable that their success would have been anything like what it was. The dark colours in which many of the ministers of the leading denominations represented their doctrines, excited the curiosity of several of their hearers to go and hear them, that they might judge for themselves ; who, finding that neither the preachers nor their doctrines were so bad as they had heard them described, were induced to become regular attendants on their ministry.

'The Independents, Baptists, Calvinistic Methodists, and all the evangelical clergy at this time were rigid Calvinists ; and seeing that these Nonconforming congregations who had professed themselves Arminians about fifty or sixty years before, were now become avowed Arians or Unitarians, another attempt to propagate Arminianism in Wales was looked upon by them with great horror.'¹

Dr. Rees further says that the Calvinists of that time failed to perceive the essential difference between the evangelical Arminianism of the Wesleyans and the cold Pelagianism of the old Nonconformists of the eighteenth century ; or if they did perceive it, they had not the candour to acknowledge it. Hence they kept aloof from the Wesleyan preachers, and would not acknowledge them as Christian brethren. There is one fact in connection with this great work which Dr. Rees fails to acknowledge, that is the conspicuous ability of the band of Wesleyan preachers. He says that 'there was nothing extraordinary in their talents or positions.' That the divine blessing was manifest in the raising up of such a band of men, in the direction of their work, the courage, discretion, ability, and success of their efforts, all will agree. At the same time we contend that

¹ *History of Nonconformity*, pp. 421, 422.

the group of leading Wesleyans on the whole was an extraordinary one. These men had not been trained at the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge it is true, and there were some of them who were not highly educated. But in this respect they were like the other great preachers of Non-conformity in Wales—Christinos Evans, John Elias, Williams (The Wern), Robert Roberts (Clynog), John Jones (Talysarn), etc. But as to scholarship they were not to be compared to John Hughes, the author of *Horæ Britannicæ, Essay on the Welsh Language, Theological Essays*, and seven or eight other volumes, with regard to which Dr. Burgess, Bishop of St. David's, Carnhuanawc, and several of the highest authorities, expressed the highest commendation. Samuel Davies (1st), David Rogers, Edward Jones (2nd), John Williams (2nd), William Evans, held their own with all-comers in defending their doctrines and discipline. The success of Edward Jones (Bathafarn), William Davies (1st), David Rogers, Hugh Hughes, and others, in leading souls to the Saviour, was equal to that of the best men in the Welsh pulpit. On missionary, Bible Society, and temperance platforms, Griffith Hughes and David Jones attracted the people from all sides; while Edward Anwyl, Richard Bonner, and Bryan were able to hold their own side by side with the greatest preachers and speakers of Wales.

Dr. Rees has admitted that the leaders of the other denominations represented in ‘dark colours the doctrines preached by the Wesleyans,’ and he afterwards confessed that these ‘good Calvinists could not distinguish the difference between evangelical Arminianism and cold Pelagianism,’ which very clearly shows that the Wesleyan preachers, ‘without anything extraordinary in their talents or positions,’ understood these doctrines better than the ‘popular ministers of the leading denominations’ in the Principality. Dr. Rees further says that ‘the Welsh Wesleyan body, from an early period in their history, manifested great zeal, perseverance,

and activity in their efforts to cultivate religious literature in the Welsh language. Two or three attempts had been made in the eighteenth century to establish Welsh periodicals, but they all had proved unsuccessful. Even the valuable magazine started by Mr. Charles of Bala in 1799 was discontinued in 1802. In the year 1809 the Wesleyan body had courage to start a Welsh monthly magazine entitled *Yr Eurgrawn Wesleyaidd*, and their enterprise succeeded. About the same time they also began to publish a translation of Dr. Coke's *Commentary on the Bible*. Their enterprising spirit and success at last moved all other denominations. One after another started its denominational magazine, so that in the present day (1861) there are twelve or fifteen religious periodicals published monthly in the Welsh language.' This fact, as given by Dr. Rees in his own words, further shows that these Wesleyans, 'without anything extraordinary in their talents or positions,' were more successful in the work, understood the doctrines better, and during the short period erected over eighty chapels. After men of extraordinary ability had failed, they succeeded in producing in the Welsh language a successful religious literature; and they pointed out to others, who had previously failed, by their own example, how they might succeed. The only conclusion which can be fairly drawn from the facts as given by Dr. Rees is, that these Wesleyan preachers were men of extraordinary ability, capacity, and talents; men of power in the pulpit, of discretion and business capacity in the direction of their work; men of intelligence, genius, and zeal; and men who were whole-hearted in their work, to which they devoted their all in a most extraordinary manner. With regard to another matter, Dr. Rees says: 'We cannot help expressing our disapprobation of the blamable apathy and backwardness which they (the Welsh Wesleyans) have always manifested when called upon to co-operate with their Nonconformist brethren in their efforts to secure those rights which the Legislature has from

time to time granted them.' It is pleasant to find that in his second edition Dr. Rees has modified this view, and admitted that 'a change for the better had taken place,' and that 'there were now several ministers and laymen in this body as active as the other sects in promoting religious and civil liberty.' Why Dr. Rees should have written the paragraph at all is a mystery, having admitted on the previous page that the Nonconformists 'kept aloof from the Wesleyans for years, and would not acknowledge them as brethren.' How could the latter co-operate with the former under these circumstances? We believe that it is the duty of the Wesleyan Church to stand up for its rights like other Nonconformist bodies; but we cannot see how Dr. Rees could condemn the Wesleyan fathers for not co-operating with those who intentionally and persistently ignored them. The Wesleyan fathers in the Principality had as much right to their views as their neighbours had to believe in and hold opposite ones. They were in no sense under any obligation to remain passive, or to hide their talents under a bushel. They conscientiously believed the Arminian doctrines, they accepted the Wesleyan economy as in their judgment the best, and with fearless courage, zeal, and considerable ability they prosecuted their labours with marvellous success.

The greatest shock to Wesleyan Methodism in the Principality was the sudden death of Dr. Coke. The father of missions wielded great influence over the Wesleyan Conference. His generosity and power of raising money were well known; the interest he had taken in founding and continuing the Welsh mission; the fact of his being a Welshman; his attachment to the land of his fathers as shown during his life, and the clause in his will directing that his mortal remains should be buried in the Old Priory, Brecon,—all these facts inspired the confidence of the Welsh preachers. Humanly speaking, he was their hope and confidence, and to lose him was their greatest loss. The Welsh work had steadily grown

for twelve years, and by that year there were forty-eight ministers in the work. Immediately after the death of Dr. Coke the Conference was compelled to withdraw some of the Welsh ministers; and in 1820 the staff had been reduced from forty-eight to twenty-nine. To lessen the ministerial staff by nineteen in a young Church in such a short period was most disastrous, as shown in previous chapters. The recently formed Circuits suffered the most; scores of promising Societies were given up, and Wesleyan Methodism withdrawn from large tracts of country, into which up to the present time it has never again been introduced. Many feeble Societies held on for a time, and after a long and painful struggle were given up. Conference, undoubtedly pressed under heavy financial burdens, adopted the inevitable, but it was a strange and mysterious providence which at this time shaped its end. A few more years of help would have placed Welsh Wesleyanism on a firm and solid foundation. The withdrawal of workers before it was able to stand left it many years to struggle for its existence. For a long period the ministers had to battle with difficulties. They responded with much courage, and were beginning to conquer, when they were again, especially in South Wales, retarded in their progress by the reform agitation.

Wesleyan Methodism has done much for the Principality. It has lived down the opposition; it has to some extent outgrown its weakness; and to-day in almost every pulpit of the leading denominations its doctrines are preached; while a larger and growing section consider the Methodist economy the most perfect and satisfactory.



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CHAPTER XIX.

DENBIGHSHIRE.

Ruthin the First Welsh Society—Jones, Bathafarn—The Carrier's Loft—The First Ministers—Members and Chapel—Quarterly Meeting—The Memorial Chapel—Evan Roberts—Henry Carter—Denbigh Society—New Chapel—Love-feast—Stephen Games—W. Parry—Rowland Hughes—Samuel Davies (2nd)—Clwydfardd—Dr. Pierce—J. H. Jones—Llanelwy—John Foulkes—Parry, Faenol-fawr—New Chapel—Llanfair D. C.—Hirwain—Llandegla—Llansanan—Llanelidan—Robert Williams, Bodfari—Abergele—Pierce, Seller—The Persecutors—Lot Hughes—Llysfaen—Dawn—Bettws—Moelfre—Llanfair-Talhaiarn—Salem—Llanrwst—Dr. Coke—Llanrwst Preachers—Eglwysfach—John Evans (b)—Pennachno—Hugh Hughes called upon to defend his Doctrine—Cwm—Capel Garmon—Llangollen—Edward Jones—Cefnmawr—Jubilee—Glyndyfrdwy—Methodism in the County, etc.

THE first Society formed by the Welsh missionaries was at Ruthin. This name is variously derived. It was said by some that before the town developed, a woman by the name of Ruth kept an inn—Ruth-Inn. The principal parts of the town are situated on red sand or ashes, hence the name was probably taken from the ruddy hue of the soil. *Rhuth-rhudd*, ruddy, crimson, red; *in*, an abbreviation of *din*, signifying a ruddy town. The English name would therefore be Red Town. We have followed the introduction of Methodism in Ruthin to the appointment by Conference of the Revs. Owen Davies and John Hughes as ministers, this town being the head of the Circuit. The first members came from Denbigh, Llansanan, and elsewhere. The Society had been formed in connection with the Chester Circuit, was at first English, and for some time it was found necessary to have an

English Society class. The preaching was in Welsh in the morning and English in the evening. On November 24, 1800, a love-feast was held, the first in the Welsh work in Wales. The Wesleyans had come from Denbigh, Northop, and even farther away. Owen Davies presided. John Hughes explained the history and design of the institution, and Jones (Bathafarn) gave the history of his conversion and the struggles through which he had passed. Morris of Northop followed, then John Bryan, Owen Davies, and the friends one after the other, and the influence was so overwhelming that it was altogether impossible to control the feelings of those present. This meeting was not brought to a close till twelve o'clock that night, and it left a deep impression upon the minds of the friends generally. The first quarterly meeting was held at Ruthin, and Richard Harrison of Northop and Richard Williams of Acre, and formerly of Chester, were appointed the first Circuit stewards. The Society improved rapidly, and the old carrier's loft became too small and inconvenient in which to carry on so important a work. Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) had been promised a site in one of the best positions in the town, but when this was known, some of the leading townsmen, being violently opposed to the Wesleyans, brought such pressure to bear on the landowner that he withdrew his offer. This was a form of opposition frequently practised. A second effort succeeded in securing a site, but in a back street. In many instances the people who interfered with and did their best to prevent the Wesleyans securing sites, were professedly religious and leading men in connection with Nonconformist churches. It has often been said in the Principality that Wesleyan chapels were in the background, as if erected during bitter persecution ; and in many instances, like the Ruthin case, that is true. A plot of land in Mill Street was secured, the chapel erected, and at the time it was considered the finest in the valley. It was dedicated to the worship of God on November 16, 1802, the Revs. Owen

Davies, John Hughes, Jones (Bathafarn) and John Bryan all taking part in the services. After the morning service, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered by Messrs. Davies and Hughes to about 300 persons, and after the evening sermon a love-feast was held. It was a 'day of rest and gladness,' and great joy was experienced by the hundreds present on that occasion. Dr. Coke preached in the Ruthin Chapel, and spent a Sunday in the town on his way to Ireland in 1808. He was not able to preach in the vernacular, but he was able to say, 'The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee,' etc., in Welsh, and to give out the translation of 'Come, let us join our cheerful songs,' etc. The day was one of great grace and full of blessed memories, and often referred to by the old people for many years.

Ruthin being the first Society formed, the members came a long distance to take part in the service; but when classes were established at Denbigh and other places, the members withdrew from the mother Society. The first members at Ruthin were John Davies, a brother of the Rev. Owen Davies, John Jones, Thomas Roberts, Robert Jones, Mr. Foulkes, Edward Williams, and Griffith Parry. The first District meeting was held at Ruthin in 1804, Owen Davies being the chairman of the District. The opposition to Mr. Edward Jones in his own home had gradually melted down by the sweetness of his temper, the purity of his language, thoughts, and actions; and one day his father said to him, 'Edward, you pray in the room, why not pray for us in this house?' Little did the father know about the hours his son had spent in agony of soul imploring the divine blessing upon the family, and especially on his own parents. His prayers had come up before God, the Spirit had been working silently for some time, and now the son of Bathafarn had the joy of finding the members of his own family yielding their hearts to the Saviour. One of his sisters became the wife of David

Davies, 'The Shop,' and with her husband (who was for years a local preacher) did much for Wesleyan Methodism in the Ruthin Circuit. Notwithstanding that the chapel was built in a back street, there was a good congregation, and, considering the population, a fairly strong Society, which was soon strengthened by new additions. John Williams, the tanner, Thomas Hughes, and Thomas Jones did much service as local preachers, as did Charles Jones more recently. There were devoted women who joined the Society at Ruthin—Jane Jones, who died in 1812; Sarah Thomas, who died in 1821; Jane Jones, the wife of Captain Jones, who passed away in 1822; and Elizabeth Roberts, who was a devoted Methodist up to the time of her death in 1842. The zeal, fidelity, and devotion of the first group of Methodist women proved a most important factor in the religious life of Ruthin. There were also a number of intelligent class and prayer leaders. Edward Jones the first and second, the two Robertses, Charles Jones, and in later years J. O. Anwyl.

In 1801 the Ruthin Circuit decided to support at their own cost two ministers, and the following year a third, Dr. Coke the fourth. There was, however, a considerable debt on the chapel, which hampered the trustees for years. In 1856 an effort was made to pay off this debt, and by the assistance of the loan fund it was accomplished. The chapel, which had been in use for more than half a century, was gradually becoming an eyesore to many of the friends, and in 1859 considerable improvements were made. In 1868, at the North Wales District meeting it was decided to erect at Ruthin a memorial chapel of Edward Jones (Bathafarn). A new site in a front street on the way to the railway station was secured. This chapel, which was opened for divine worship September 26 and 27, 1869, is an ornament to the town, and worthy of the founder of the Wesleyan Society in that town. The Rev. Lot Hughes, who had been converted under the preaching of Jones (Bathafarn), had passed his

examination at the Llanrwst quarterly meeting in the presence of Dr. Coke in 1808, and who was then in his eighty-third year, was present at the opening of this chapel, and gave an interesting account of the rise and progress of Wesleyan Methodism in the Vale of Clwyd. The Revs. Samuel Davies, the chairman of the District, who when a young man had met Jones (Bathafarn), and Dr. William Davies, John Jones (Vulcan), John Evans (B), Robert Jones (B), and others took part in the services. The Rev. Owen Lloyd Davies was the superintendent of the Circuit at the time, and the guiding spirit of the movement. In 1884 a handsome tablet was, at the request of the North and South Wales Districts, erected in the chapel in memory of Mr. Jones (Bathafarn).

Ruthin Society, if not one of the largest and most influential of Welsh Wesleyan churches, will always have a warm place in the affection of every Methodist historian throughout all time, and with it the name of Jones (Bathafarn) will go down to future generations. R. Lloyd Jones, who is one of the best known and most highly respected ministers in the North Wales District, and who entered the ministry in 1872, comes from Ruthin.

The first Society formed at Ruthin included Evan Roberts of Denbigh, who had been a Wesleyan for many years. His brother William had gone to reside in Liverpool, in which town he joined that body. On one of his visits to Denbigh, he had exhorted his relatives to give their hearts to Christ. Evan was deeply impressed, and some time after that went to Liverpool, where he heard the Methodist preachers and also Mr. Wesley himself, and identified himself with 'the people called Methodists.' Mr. Evan Roberts was intensely anxious that Mr. Wesley should appoint ministers to Wales who could preach in the Welsh language. 'I have only one preacher able to preach in the vernacular,' said Mr. Wesley, 'Thomas Oliver, and we are compelled to retain him at the printing office in London.' Mr. Wesley consented that John

Ramshaw should visit Denbigh. When Mr. Ramshaw took his stand near the market place in that town, the soldiers, under the direction of one of their officers, endeavoured to drown his voice by their noise, but this act of persecution reacted in favour of the preacher. In the crowd of people who heard him was Henry Carter, who, although he had no prior intention or even sympathised with the preacher, was so impressed with the necessity of granting full liberty to each individual to act according to his own conscience, that he pressed on through the crowd, invited the preacher to his house, and promised him, or any other Methodist preacher who would come to Denbigh, a home. Mr. Ramshaw visited Denbigh afterwards, accompanied by Richard Davies of Liverpool, but a native of Dinas Mawddwy. The latter after this visit occasionally preached at Denbigh. Gabriel Edwards became a Wesleyan, as did Henry Carter; these three—Evan Roberts, Gabriel Edwards, Henry Carter—together with Mrs. Elizabeth Gwynne and her daughters Judith and Phoebe and a few others, held together, having sweet fellowship in following the Lord Jesus with great fidelity. They heard of Richard Harrison of Northop, and invited him to preach at Denbigh, which he did about twice every quarter.

The Liverpool ministers occasionally visited Denbigh in 1792, but being unable to preach in the vernacular, they judged it best not to visit that town any longer. The ministers stationed at Chester considered the opening more important, and Francis Wrigley and his colleagues preached at Denbigh as often as they could, as did also their immediate successors; but, like the Liverpool ministers, they lost heart, and soon ceased to visit the Vale of Clwyd. In 1798 Mr. Edward Linnell, an Excise officer, the son of a Methodist minister, and himself a local preacher and zealous Methodist, came to reside at Llansanan, a small village about eight miles from Denbigh. He heard of the few Wesleyans who met together in the county town, and at once joined

them, and his zeal and devotion were made a blessing to them. He travelled the sixteen miles regularly to meet the class which he took charge of, and occasionally secured a preacher from Chester, frequently taking the service himself. John Bryan visited the town, and preached in Henry Carter's house to a large company. The people heard him gladly, and eight or nine joined the Society after that service. In August 1800, on the last Sunday in that month, the Rev. Owen Davies opened his commission in the town of Denbigh, preaching in the morning in the house of Mr. Carter, while in the evening the congregation was so large that service was conducted in that gentleman's orchard. Henry Carter's house was the centre of their operations, but they were not allowed to worship without many annoyances, and frequently they were treated most shamefully and cruelly. The little Society was confident and faithful, and felt that now with two ministers appointed to labour amongst them they would go on and prosper. Evan Roberts was appointed class-leader, and the Society was regularly visited by their preachers. In 1801 a site was bought of Henry Carter upon which to build a chapel, which was opened for divine worship on the first day in 1802 by the Revs. Owen Davies and John Hughes. After the evening service they held a love-feast, at which there were two hundred present. The completed chapel (the first Welsh Wesleyan chapel ever erected), the number present, the great success of the labours during the first year of toil, and the holy fire which burned in their hearts, altogether made the day, which was closed with a watch-night service, one of the happiest, brightest, and most blessed they had ever experienced. Amongst the first members at Denbigh, in addition to those afore-named, were William Jones, The Orchard (Berllan), and his wife ; Elizabeth Foulkes, afterwards Mrs. Games ; Richard Griffith, watchmaker, and his wife, parents of David Griffith (Clwydfarudd), the Archdruid, who is now (1893) still hale, and able to preach

with power as a local preacher, though in his ninety-third year —he has done good service for nearly three-quarters of a century ; Mary Evans, the mother of the Rev. John Roberts (A), who after travelling in many of the best Circuits in London, Sheffield, Manchester, Birmingham, etc., died at Shrewsbury, December 28, 1882, in the sixty-third year of his age and the thirty-sixth of his ministry ; Edward Jones, glover ; and Sergeant Owen,—these are the names of the few people who were not ashamed to suffer persecution for Christ and Wesleyan Methodism. The anniversary of the new chapel was one of the great days to those good people, the Circuit quarterly meeting being held there, after which Mr. Richard Harrison preached in English and John Bryan in Welsh. The public meeting was followed by a love-feast, when there were four hundred present, and eighty took part in the meeting. Many had come from Abergale on the one hand, and Flintshire on the other. These people went on their way rejoicing, travelling all night in order to be home for work next morning. In 1804 Denbigh was made the head of a new Circuit, Owen Davies being the first superintendent, and Stephen Games and Robert Roberts his colleagues. The second District meeting was held in the town of Denbigh in 1805. Several such meetings have been held in the metropolis of Clwydland since that date. Owen Davies resided in this town for twelve years as general superintendent of the Welsh work. The Denbigh Society soon developed into one of the most interesting and influential in the District. In 1807 Stephen Games retired from the ministry, settled at Denbigh, where he remained faithfully discharging the duties of class-leader, local preacher, etc., up to the time of his death in 1814, at the age of thirty-five. Mr. Games was an able preacher, who had fought and conquered his doubts, and stood unflinchingly by the doctrine and discipline of Wesleyan Methodism. In 1811 William Parry, a native of Dyserth, who during his stay in Liverpool

was converted to God, received his first quarterly ticket from the sainted William Bramwell, who also put him on the plan as an exhorter. Mr. Parry came to Denbigh and opened a business as chemist in that town, in connection with which he remained in active work for nearly sixty years. For some time after his arrival he felt a desire to volunteer for foreign mission work. Finally, after much thought, he offered to go out to India with Dr. Coke. Owen Davies advised him not to go, showing at the same time that there was a sphere for him in Denbigh of equal importance, and but for this advice, to which he yielded, it is probable that William Parry would have been one of the band of young men who were left like orphans in consequence of the death of Dr. Coke. Mr. Parry, however, had a long, active, and useful career at Denbigh as local preacher, class-leader, steward, and trustee. His fidelity, punctuality, order, and generosity, in connection with local, District, and Connexional work, gave him a foremost position in the North Wales District for half a century. He died at Rhyl, February 16, 1871, and left all his savings, contingent on the death of his wife and daughter, to the North Wales Home Mission, the Chapel Fund, and the Foreign Missions. The Denbigh Society became respectable, and to some extent stationary. The Rev. Lot Hughes intimates that as early as 1824, when the Rev. Hugh Hughes was superintendent, the time had come for extension, the chapel being filled. Again in 1832-33-34 the town developed, and the congregations again increased, and many families needed sittings, which were not available. The other denominations, more prompt and ready to seize the opportunity, built larger chapels, and greatly benefited, while the Wesleyans remained in a stationary condition. With such men as we have mentioned, and others, like Richard Jones, Tal-haiarn; David Roberts, the gardener; Roberts, The Bank; David Griffith, Clwydfardd; Edward Hughes and William Hughes, John Jones, Thomas B. Jones,

Richard Griffith, and other influential families, it is strange that they were not more successful in discerning the signs of the times. But after sixty years the old chapel was enlarged and greatly improved. At the reopening on January 5 and 6, 1862, the Revs. Dr. William Davies and Ebenezer Morgan conducted the services, the former preaching the funeral sermon of the Rev. Rowland Hughes, the superintendent of the Circuit, who had died suddenly at Denbigh on the previous Christmas Day, in the fifty-first year of his age and the thirtieth of his ministry. The sudden death of Rowland Hughes, at the early age of fifty, was a great shock to the Wesleyans of the Principality. He was considered by all denominations to be one of the very ablest of Welsh preachers, and his loss to the Wesleyan Church was one of those mysterious providences which brought with it unusual sorrow. The Denbigh Society has sent out to the Wesleyan ministry, William Batten, William Hughes, and Hugh Carter, who laboured hard and well in the early days of Methodism; R. S. Ellis, who entered the English ministry in 1840, and died at Highbury, London, April 21, 1882, was a good man and a thoughtful preacher; Samuel Davies (2nd), and John Roberts (A). The latter went over to the English work; the former, who entered the ministry in 1843, died at Amlwch, June 7, 1891, at the age of seventy-four. His superior endowments placed him in the front rank of Welsh preachers. He was an able editor and book steward, filled the position of chairman of his District for twenty-one years, and did much to defend Wesleyan Methodism, preserve its history, and to propagate its truths. Altogether, his position as preacher, pastor, administrator, editor, book steward, and representative of Wesleyan Methodism gives him a position second to none, and it may be fairly doubted if any one Welsh Wesleyan minister filled so large and useful a sphere as Samuel Davies (2nd). A. Lloyd Hughes, who entered the ministry in 1880, comes from Denbigh; while Evan Roberts

a local preacher for fifty years, died at Denbigh, December 22, 1833, seventy-seven years of age. Mr. Roberts had been a faithful member of the Wesleyan Society for fifty-seven years, and was greatly beloved by a large circle of friends, his funeral being one of the largest ever seen in the town. Robert Davies, William Parry, David Griffith, John Jones, Thomas B. Jones were also useful local preachers, some of whom were in labours abundant for many years, and ‘their works follow them.’ Methodism in the Principality owes much to its local preachers, and men like Richard Harrison and Evan Roberts hold a higher and more honourable position than any political or ecclesiastical recognition could confer upon them. They plodded on, without hope of reward or recognition, in the midst of persecution, superstition, and many infirmities, preaching a present, willing, and mighty Saviour, and they had the joy of ‘turning many to righteousness.’ Surely these men shall shine hereafter with greater lustre, ‘like the brightness of the firmament for ever and ever.’

In recent years the Denbigh Chapel has been thoroughly renovated, and is now most comfortable and attractive. A second chapel, called Salem, has also been erected. The Society at Denbigh has not lacked prominent men and generous supporters. Dr. Pierce, one of the most eminent medical men in the Principality, coroner, alderman, mayor, philanthropist, has been a most zealous and generous Wesleyan Methodist for many, many years. The Salem Chapel was largely supported by him; the minister’s house, which is one of the best in the Principality, was by him presented to the Connexion; the public charities of Denbigh have found in him one of their best and most liberal supporters. His name will remain fragrant when possibly the monument erected in his honour by his fellow-townsman will have crumbled to dust. J. Harrison Jones, mayor, magistrate, Circuit steward, class-leader, local preacher, is also

a name worthy of the best traditions of the early Methodism of the Vale of Clwyd ; while Isaac Williams, Boaz Jones, and others will live in the memories of their fellow-towns men for years to come.

St. Asaph, or Llanelwy, to give it the Welsh name, was visited by John Hughes on Monday, the 1st day of September 1800. He took his stand in the street, near the old cathedral, and preached to an attentive congregation. At the close of the service, he announced that he would preach in the same place the following Monday. His third visit to St. Asaph was on September 29, and he preached to a large congregation, chiefly in Welsh. He was invited to the house of Mr. Robert Jones, timber merchant, where a home was provided for many a Wesleyan preacher after that service. In a few weeks, thirty-five persons had joined the Methodist Society in the cathedral city. In 1801 Owen Davies took a room in the lower end of the little city called Tan-y-bylchau, in which to hold their regular services. Robert Jones, above named, identified himself with the Society, as did Thomas Roberts, R. Jones, the butcher, and his two daughters, Mary Davies, Jane Roberts, Ellen Lee, Sarah Salisbury, and others. Shortly after this a number of young people were led to hear Jones (Bathafarn) preach, amongst others John Foulkes, the son of a respectable farmer living at Pant-Ifan, then at school at St. Asaph. The schoolboy was truly converted to God, but his parents were greatly annoyed, and were determined to do everything in their power to prevent their son identifying himself with a sect which must be wrong, as it was condemned by all other Churches. The lad, however, knew what he was about, and decided to stand by his convictions at any cost. He was persecuted, ignored, cast out of home, and badly treated. Many a night as he returned home from the services he found the door shut against him, and was glad to take refuge and sleep in the hayloft. When fourteen years of age, he began to exhort sinners to come to Christ, and his

preaching was acceptable and attractive. The boy-preacher's character attracted general attention, for his neighbours could not but speak well of him. His father, hearing kind things said about the son, was gradually brought into a more tolerant mood, and was finally induced to hear Mr. Bryan preach at the house of Thomas Davies, Tremeirchion. From that day onward the house of the Foulkeses became a preacher's home ; his son John had a horse to take him to his appointments, and in 1802 a small chapel was erected at Tremeirchion, near to their house, chiefly at their own cost. The young man became very useful ; but in 1810, when only twenty-four years of age, John Foulkes was removed from the beautiful Vale of Clwyd to the Eden above. The Wesleyans of that Circuit were keenly sensible of their loss ; they thought and said that heaven was in a hurry to take from them so early a young man so useful and full of promise. He 'makes His paths in the mighty waters,' His judgments are unsearchable, but His throne is established in the heavens, where all is light and love. The early promise at St. Asaph was not sustained. In 1813 Mr. and Mrs. David Parry, a brother of Mr. Parry, Denbigh, came to reside at Plas Coch (the Red Palace), and afterwards at Faenol-fawr, and as leader and local preacher Mr. Parry became a tower of strength to the cause in the city and Circuit. In 1814 a site was procured from Mrs. Parry's father, and a chapel was erected, and the Society gathered strength. Many influential families joined the Wesleyans. In 1830 the old chapel was enlarged, but the damp, swampy nature of the site was a great objection, and in 1862 another site was procured in a better position, and after a series of unfortunate circumstances a much larger chapel was opened for divine worship. In consequence of the difficulties with the foundation, the chapel cost sixty per cent. more than the contemplated sum. For years the trustees were very greatly pressed with heavy financial burdens. The trustees of the new chapel were Messrs. D. Parry, H. Roberts,

D. Williams, J. Vaughan, O. Williams, and E. Johnson. Mr. Robert Jones, the first to welcome the Methodist preachers to his house, continued a consistent and exemplary Christian to the time of his death, as did also Mr. and Mrs. Foulkes, Pant-Ifan. Mrs. Roberts, the draper, Anne Vaughan, and Jemima Humphreys adorned the Christian doctrine in lives of devotion to Christ and the Church. John Williams, the saddler, was for many years a zealous local preacher, and he had the satisfaction of seeing two of his sons preachers—Richard and Philip. The latter has had a long and useful career as one of the travelling preachers in the North Wales District, and is in active work. Thomas G. Pugh, who has been for many years a travelling preacher, taking good Circuits in North and South Wales, began to preach at St. Asaph; and Thomas Powell, John Williams, H. Roberts, J. H. Jones, and R. Roberts were useful preachers of the gospel connected with the Wesleyan Society in the cathedral city. Mr. David Parry, Faenol-fawr, up to the time of his death, March 28, 1867, aged seventy-four, was one of the most highly respected men in that part of the county. His home was ever open to Methodist preachers, and many an overworked minister found a true resting-place at Faenol-fawr. For fifty years he was class-leader and local preacher, always considering his class-night the great night of the week. He expressed a wish that he should be buried on his class-night, which wish was respected.

Llanfair Dyffryn Clwyd (Mary Church in the Vale Clwyd) was frequently visited by Richard Harrison and Evan Roberts long before the Conference appointed Welsh preachers to Wales. They preached in the open air, and when the weather would not permit in a barn lent by Mr. Hughes, Tycoch, and were frequently favoured with large congregations. Certain rumours were circulated by the villagers to the effect that the preachers had seen strange visions, and were coming to the neighbourhood to inform the people as to the

mysteries of what they had seen. The Llanfair Society was the largest as reported at the first quarterly meeting in 1800. John Hughes visited Llanfair on October 4, 1800, and again November 23, the same year, reporting that 'the fields were white for the harvest,' which he attributes to the services of the Messrs. Harrison, Jones, and he might have added the name of Evan Roberts. There were then twenty-five members of Society at Llanfair. On September 26, 1801, Bryan and Jones of Bathafarn, hearing that there was a wake at Llanfair beginning that Saturday night, which would be continued all day on Sunday, at which drinking, dancing, fighting would be carried on on a large scale, proceeded to the place, and they took their stand in a prominent position. Mr. Bryan preached a powerful and pointed sermon from the words, 'Escape for thy life,' and many who went in order to make sport of the preacher were pricked to the heart, and cried aloud for mercy. The service did much to destroy the parish wake (*gwylmabsant*); it was also the beginning of a great work which spread to Ruthin, Llandegla, Llanelidan, and other places in the neighbourhood. Amongst others who joined the Society at Llanfair in the very beginning was David Rogers, who some time after became one of the most powerful preachers in the work. He was a man of a timid and reluctant disposition, but of a reflective mind, and was converted under the preaching of Jones (Bathafarn). One night Mr. Jones was speaking in the Society meeting at Llanfair, and he pressed the young men to engage in prayer, to take part in the means of grace, and to cultivate their talents. This left a deep impression on young Rogers's mind. On his way home, in company with another young man, they talked about the matter, and eventually went over the hedge into a field, and there they began to pray for help, strength, and grace to conquer the fear of men. Shortly after, David Rogers was made a class-leader, began to preach, and in 1805 entered the ministry. In 1802 a small chapel was erected

on a plot of land procured from Mr. John Hughes, Tycoch. Several families identified themselves with the Society in the new chapel—John Hughes and his family, Evan Evans, Fron, and his family; John Bonner came to live in the neighbourhood, and the work was very promising. The early promise, however, was not speedily realized. In 1845 the chapel was enlarged and renovated, made comfortable and attractive and suitable to the neighbourhood. The work then received a new impetus, and has been carried on more satisfactorily since that time.

Hirwain, in the Vale of Clwyd, was first visited by Jones (Bathafarn) on Whit-Monday 1801. A chair was brought out from the house of John Jones, the turner, on which the preacher stood to deliver his message. The congregation included people from Ruthin, Llanarmon, Llandegla, Llandyrnog, Llanelidan, Llanfair, and other places in the neighbourhood. The Rev. Lot Hughes says that Mr. Jones was celebrated for his singing as well as his preaching. The common people said that he had brought with him from Manchester some new tunes, and so many came to hear him sing who did not care to hear him preach. He gave out his hymn and began to sing, and at once secured the attention of his hearers; in singing the last hymn the congregation was melted, so Mr. Jones sang, prayed, praised, and the people were heard singing the tune and hymn on their way home, and a great impression was made. Mr. Lot Hughes records that in after years at love-feasts in various places he heard many testify that it was at that meeting they had been led to give their hearts to the Saviour. After this service a Society was formed, which met in the house of John Jones, the turner, who with his wife became members, together with William Jones of Tynycelyn and his wife; Richard Roberts, Rhiw; Grace Roberts; Evan Evans, Fron; Elizabeth Jones, and others, who identified themselves with the new sect. In 1803, on the Whit-Monday, a new chapel was opened for divine

worship at Hirwain, at which Owen Davies, John Hughes, and Richard Harrison took part in the dedication services. Mr. Richard Roberts and William Jones were the class-leaders. Mr. Roberts's niece, who was brought up at Rhiw, while still young joined the Wesleyans, and her godliness and intelligence attracted considerable attention. She afterwards became the devoted wife of Mr. Bryan. She died in great peace at Burslem, where her husband was stationed, in 1821. The Society at Hirwain passed through periods of trial and disappointment. In a thinly populated district, the death of a prominent worker or the removal of a leading family meant a great deal. The removal of Robert Jones from Llandyrnog to Hirwain was made a great blessing to the cause in the latter place; but the Society has since passed through many changes, and experienced dark as well as bright days.

Llandegla, which is in the Ruthin Circuit, was visited by Jones (Bathafarn) in 1801. There was living at Chweleiriog a John Jones, who for some time had resided in London and had often heard Mr. Wesley preach, and was deeply impressed under his preaching. After his return to his native place, he frequently longed to hear a Wesleyan preacher. When the news was carried to him that the son of Bathafarn had returned from Manchester, and was preaching with the Wesleyans, he lost no time in inviting the young preacher to Llandegla, and Mr. Jones lost no time in deciding to accept the invitation. After the service, Mrs. Davies, 'The Shop,' asked the preacher to stay the night at her house. She joined 'the people called Methodists,' and her house became the preacher's home. Mr. Bryan visited the place; Betsy, the daughter of Mrs. Davies, was converted under his sermon, and ere long died, happily trusting in Christ. Mrs. Jones, Chweleiriog, and three of her daughters also joined the Society; and John Williams and his sister Eleanor; Mrs. Parry, Bodidris, and two of her daughters; Jane Roberts,

Anne Parry, and others, and what was known as a very respectable Society was formed at Llandegla. For some years the friends worshipped in the loft of the Cross Keys. A small chapel was erected in 1812, in a back place behind the Blue Bell. Several of the leading families died out and left the Society much weakened. The coming to the neighbourhood of Mr. Thomas Roberts of Green Park was the means of giving new life to the Society. Mr. Roberts set about getting a new chapel in a better place, and after some difficulties a site was secured on the estate of Lord Mostyn, in a much better position, and in 1842 a comfortable chapel dedicated to the worship of God, in place of the little one under the shadow of the public-house. The cause, which for some time was like the smoking flax, now again showed itself a burning and shining light. Mr. Thomas Roberts and Robert Jones were the leaders, both men of considerable ability and intelligence, who did good service for Christ in that neighbourhood.

Preaching was established in 1801 at Llansanan, where Edward Linnell lived, and a small Society formed ; but whilst great good was done for a time, the few friends upon whom the work rested removed elsewhere, and those who remained lost heart and identified themselves with other Societies in the Circuit.

When the Wesleyan services were first instituted at Ruthin, a young man from Penygraig, Llanelidan, and a relative of Jones (Bathafarn), was at school in that town, and in the year 1801 he invited Jones to preach in that village. On a Sunday afternoon in that year, the son of Bathafarn stood on a chair near a spot called the Rhewl, and preached Christ the Saviour of the world, and many were the slain of the Lord. A Society was formed at Llanelidan ; and John Davies, Penygraig ; Catherine Davies, Tyddyn ; Richard Jones, Brynllian, and his sister Margaret ; John Davies, Trewyn ; D. Evans ; Mary Jones, Bryncymau ; Edward Edwards ; William Jones,

Tranfryn, became members. William Jones entered the ministry in 1803, from which he retired in 1816. He was a very powerful preacher. Robert Humphreys, who was present at the first service and was convinced of sin, but for some time held back without joining the people of God, was further impressed under the preaching of his friend and neighbour, William Jones. He also began to preach. In 1805 he entered the ministry, and laboured hard and successfully up to the time of his death. A second Robert Humphreys, who also became a local preacher, cast in his lot with the little Society at Llanelidan. The Rev. Lot Hughes says that he was a good man, zealous and active, but somewhat peculiar. He died at Ruthin, where he spent the last few years of his life. The preaching was held at various houses, to which the preacher was invited. Sometimes at Lliniaugweision, Brynllian, Derwendeg, but more frequently at Hendre-bach. In 1804 a small chapel was erected near Rhyd-y-Marchogion (the Rider's Ford), several leading families joined the Wesleyans, and the work continued to prosper for several years. Like many other places, the debt was allowed to rest, the friends being satisfied with paying the interest. After the loss by death, removals, etc., the interest accumulated, and finally the mortgagee took possession of the chapel, but was prevented from selling it to the Baptists, as he intended doing, by the trust-deed. For a time the few disheartened Methodists worshipped in a room lent them by the family of Rhyd-y-Marchogion. They were preparing to build a new chapel, when Mr. Robert Williams, the mortgagee, came in and offered the old chapel on what they considered reasonable terms, which were accepted. This was followed by a revival of activity, and the old chapel became too small. In 1852, when the Revs. J. L. Richards and William Owen were the ministers of the Circuit, they were able to secure the co-operation of the inhabitants generally, and the chapel was enlarged and beautified, and the Society, school, congrega-

tion, and the work generally, have since gone on in a very satisfactory manner. The congregational singing has been a great attraction at Llanelidan. It was so when Catherine Davies, Tyddyn, led the congregation ; L. Edwards, Penygraig, more than kept up the fame during his leadership. Edward Edwards was for many years a class-leader at Llanelidan and Gwyddelwern, attending to both with great regularity. He was a man of singular piety and devotion, and was greatly blessed in his work. Other good men have been connected with the Methodist Society at Llanelidan, such as John Williams, Thomas Hughes, E. Jones, William Williams (who was a faithful chapel steward), Mrs. Williams, and Mrs. Davies and her daughter. More recently, Thomas Williams, D. Evans, Griffith Griffiths, and Thomas Powell deserve mention. Many of these families are descendants of men and women who were the first to come out and accept Christ while persecution was rife, and when great courage was necessary to speak for the Master. They lived and died well, their calmness in death explaining the nobleness of their lives and the reality of their religion.

The labours of the Welsh missionaries were carried on in the Vale of Clwyd with considerable regularity. In 1801 we find Mr. Bryan preaching at Bryneglwys and Hendreforfydd. After preaching at the latter place on the Good Friday he was invited to a house to tea. He asked permission to pray, and, as in the house of Cornelius, the Holy Ghost descended upon them, and the young people were converted. In 1810 a chapel was erected at Henllan, the same year as Llandegla Chapel. The following year a chapel was erected at Llandrillo, which is now in the Corwen Circuit. In 1812 the Glynnisaf and Llandyrnog Chapels were erected ; the following year that of Bodfari, and in 1822 the Bryneglwys Chapel was erected. In a comparatively short time, within and on the borders of the Vale of Clwyd, there were more than twenty chapels erected for the Welsh Wesleyans. The beautiful Vale of

Clwyd was not only fertile in producing corn, fruit, flowers, etc., but particularly so in giving the Methodist Church powerful preachers of the gospel. Jones (Bathafarn), David Rogers, Robert Humphreys, William Jones, John Jones (1st), Edward Jones (2nd), Robert Roberts, Hugh Carter, William Hughes, W. Batten, Richard Bonner, Lot Hughes, Robert Owen, William Davies,—nearly all these men were the first-fruits of the Wesleyan Church in the Vale of Clwyd; and for zeal, natural ability, and success in their work they will take a position second to none in the religious history of Wales.

Robert Williams of Bodfari, who entered the ministry in 1832, and died at Llandilo, June 7, 1855, became an effective and popular preacher. Mr. Williams prepared the first congregational tune-book which was generally used by the Wesleyan congregations. Mr. W. Jacob, Holywell, and other musicians of repute, had done much for the singing of the Methodist Church in Wales. But it was Mr. Williams who brought out a tune-book which took hold of the people, and prepared the way for the high state of perfection in musical worship which has been attained in the Principality. Many of the early Methodist preachers were sweet and effective singers. Mr. Robert Williams was suddenly cut down when he had only travelled twenty-three years, at a period in his life when the Church expected most from him, and could ill afford to lose his services. God moves in a mysterious way, but as judgment and justice are the habitation of His throne, all things are done beyond the possibility of a mistake. Robert Hughes, who entered the ministry in 1861, came out from Bodfari Society, where he has a brother a local preacher of considerable usefulness.

Abergele, a small market town beautifully situated on the way from Rhyl to Llandudno, and formerly a more important centre than either of these attractive watering-places, was early visited by the Wesleyan missionaries. The name given

to this town indicated its situation near the mouth of the River Gele. The river, according to some, derives its name from *gele*, leech, a considerable number of leeches being found in the estuary in olden times. Others tell us that formerly the course of the stream was through wooded fields or groves, the Welsh name of which is *cellau*, hence Abercellau. The Rev. Thomas Morgan considers the word a contraction of *gelen*, ooze, so called from the nature of the water, the English equivalent being Oozemouth. On September 10, 1800, the Revs. Owen Davies and John Hughes visited Abergele. Refused the use of the Calvinistic Methodist and other chapels, they took their stand in the street, and the Rev. Owen Davies preached to a small company of the inhabitants. During the service they were greatly annoyed by two clergymen, accompanied by two 'gentlemen,' who conducted themselves in most 'ungentlemanly' fashion. They did much to attract the attention of the people from the preacher by talking, laughing, and jeering, but Mr. Davies took as little heed of them as possible. The missionaries were, however, disappointed with their visit to Abergele, and they went on to Conway, hoping to find a better opening. On the 30th of October the same year, the Rev. John Hughes visited the town again, and preached in the large parlour of a hotel in the centre of the place, which has since been converted into an ironmonger's shop. Mr. William Foulkes, son of the Bron-haul farm, treated him with great kindness. This service left a better impression on the minds of preacher and people, and prepared the way for the missionaries to visit the town again. On Whit-Monday 1802, Jones (Bathafarn) and Bryan visited Abergele, and it was on this occasion that the Society was formed. Mr. Richard Griffith of Denbigh had recently married Miss Edwards, daughter of William Edwards of the Seller, Abergele, and the young couple had identified themselves with the Wesleyans in the former town. When Messrs. Jones and Bryan came to Abergele, Mr. and Mrs. Griffith and other

friends from Denbigh accompanied them, and they were allowed to preach in the yard of the Seller, where a large congregation had assembled to hear them. The singing attracted great attention, and the preaching was accompanied with great power, and many were ‘the slain of the Lord.’ The service was the one topic of general conversation, and greatly annoyed the Rev. Mr. Jackson, the rector of the parish. Mr. Jones came to Abergel on a Sunday evening ere long after that service, but the clergyman made it impossible for him to preach there. Mr. Jones, coming from Conway where he had preached in the afternoon, found at Abergel three or four hundred people assembled, many of whom had come twenty miles to hear the son of Bathafarn preach. But when he alighted from his horse, he was met at once by the authorities of the place, and asked for his licence. He at once produced his certificate, to which they could not object. Then he was asked for his authority to preach in any special place, house, or yard, to which Mr. Jones replied that as no place had been recorded as a place of worship, he had no authority. ‘Then,’ said the magistrate who was present, ‘how are you so daring and impudent to preach so near to the clergyman’s house?’ to which Mr. Jones replied that he did not know the clergyman lived so near. Then followed a passage of arms, and Mr. Jones, finding it impossible to preach, asked permission to inform the crowd of people that he was not allowed to preach. The magistrate consented to this, but he said to Mr. Jones, ‘Don’t say that Griffiths, The Garn, prevented you.’ ‘In the day of judgment,’ said Mr. Jones, ‘you will have to give an account of this, and be responsible for disappointing this congregation and preventing me preaching.’ The people strongly pressed the young man to preach, and promised to stand by him and to pay any fine if any should be imposed; but Mr. Jones decided not to conduct service under the circumstances. J. W. Griffith (Garn) and Rector Jackson, by this and other acts of intolerance, did good

service to Wesleyan Methodism, securing for them sympathy and support from many persons throughout the county who could not have been influenced in any other way. Mr. J. Bryan was able to preach on a week-night at the end of the town, at a place called Pendrebach. The opposition of Churchmen and Calvinists was so bitter and persistent, that the Wesleyans were driven out of the town for some time, and in their difficulty they took a vacant house called Vron, which is now within the grounds of the Gwrych Castle. This was inconvenient, but they were glad to get it, and often found it the very gate of heaven. After a while they were able to make arrangements with Mr. R. Pierce, and the George Inn was recorded as a place of worship. The yard was used on Sunday and the large parlour on the week-days. It was in this house that Owen Davies formed the first Society class ; the first names entered on the class book were those of Robert Pierce, Thomas Vaughan, Henry Williams, Lot Hughes, and Richard Williams. The class was met by the preacher after the service whenever held on week-nights.

A site was secured on the Rhuddlan Road, at the lower end of the town, and a very substantial chapel was dedicated to the worship of God on the 26th June that year, the Revs. Owen Davies, J. Bryan, S. Games, William Jones (Llanelidan), J. Jones (Corwen), and Richard Harrison all taking part in the services.

There were in the Ruthin Circuit at this time a goodly number of local preachers, who regularly visited Abergel and other places. John Foulkes of Pant-Ifan, the popular boy-preacher, Hugh Carter, William Hughes, Evan Roberts, Joseph Matthews, Hugh Pierce of Ysgeifiog, Edward Jones (Helygen), were all often seen in this pulpit. The first chapel anniversary, held June 25, 1805, at which David Rogers, Griffith Hughes, and Stephen Games were the preachers, was made a great blessing to the cause of Methodism in the neighbourhood ; indeed, the deeply hated Wesleyans were becoming a great

force in the religious life of the town, which fact was a profound cause of annoyance to the rector and the Calvinists.

Lot Hughes very soon began to preach, became useful in the church, and in 1808 entered the ministry, which by word and deed he adorned for over sixty years. Hugh Jones (Talgarth), Richard Hughes (Pentre-uwchaf), Edward Morris, John Williams, and Thomas Ellis were also appointed local preachers, and did good and faithful service in the town and throughout the Circuit. In 1824, during the ministry of the Rev. Hugh Hughes and John Jones (2nd), the Society at Abergelé was renewed in strength and prosperity. The number of inquirers, converts, and hearers steadily went up. The chapel became more than filled; a gallery was erected and paid for. Several good men had found a home in the Wesleyan Church, and the influence of their lives and work was being felt in the town. William Jones, Rhuddlan Road, a leader, steward, trustee, local preacher all in one, was one of these—a man of exceptional character, whose moral strength was felt by all who knew him. The other workers included Pryce Evans, a Christian who enjoyed religion, and was ever ready to testify as to his own happiness. For several years, though blind, he was ‘singing, singing all the day’ on his way to and from the means of grace. Abel Jones was good and true, even though eccentric. He did not believe in unlimited sermons, and would sometimes leave the big seat and go out if his appointed time was up. Many of the old Welsh preachers would preach for an hour and a half and more, and the people as a rule would sit and listen, or even stand and listen, with breathless attention to a good sermon for any length of time; but not so Abel Jones. Peter Williams, Edward Roberts, Robert Hughes, John Davies, and John Edwards also took an active part in every branch of work, and Methodism has thrived in Abergelé up to the present time. In 1837 it was found necessary to erect a new and much larger chapel. The effort was successful, the

chapel was consecrated to the service of God by the prayers, offerings, and devotion of His people, who loved the place where the divine presence was made manifest in the means of grace. The cause prospered. They had strong men at the helm. John Williams's zeal, enthusiasm, activity, and spirituality were evidenced in his Sunday-school work, in the prayer-meeting, in the class-meeting, and in the pulpit. There were good women too—Mrs. Williams (Brynnffynon), Mrs. Foulkes (Towyn and Pensarn), Mrs. Edwards, all staunch Christians. Mr. John Edwards became the most prominent pillar of the church—a public man, chairman of local board, guardian, class-leader, local preacher, Circuit steward, and District treasurer. He always found time to attend to his religious duties, and for over half a century has done good work. Mr. Benjamin Littler, when he resided at Abergale, generously supported the institutions of Methodism in the town. The architecture of the old chapel was frequently condemned—the pulpit and galleries were too high; and notwithstanding that the building was a substantial one and equal to most places of worship, the friends felt that if the cause was to continue to grow it would be necessary to build a new chapel, and if possible to secure a site nearer the centre of the town. A site was secured, and a chapel erected, which, as to position, neatness, comfort, and brightness, is not surpassed in the county. The day the first sod was cut, at the suggestion of Mrs. Edwards (Bronfelen) a prayer-meeting was held on the site at six o'clock in the morning, and many of the old Methodists met to pour out in prayer their hearts before God—a prayer-meeting which was made to many a great blessing. The new chapel was dedicated to the service of God on September 26, 1880; prayer-meetings were held in the old chapel every night during the previous week, and on the Sunday morning, at the last meeting in the old sanctuary, four of the oldest members, Pryce Evans, John Davies, father of the Rev. John Davies (B), John Edwards,

and David Griffith (Clwydfardd), took part. At the close of the meeting they all marched in procession, led by the Rev. Robert Jones (B), the present chairman of the North Wales District, to the new sanctuary. If not carrying a literal ark, the symbol was present to their minds, and many of the old people turned their backs upon the old Shiloh with mingled feelings and a profusion of tears gushing down their cheeks. The services of the day were conducted by the Revs. Samuel Davies and Robert Jones (B). The work of God was strengthened by the effort, and the success which followed gave the Wesleyans of Abergel a better position in the town and Circuit. The generosity of the people themselves and their influence upon others were surprising, and in a comparatively short time the money was all raised. The property is now everything that could be desired, the Society is free from debt, with a good active church and a number of intelligent godly leaders, upon whose labours rests the divine blessing.

Abergel was made the head of a Circuit in 1851, and in 1862 it was divided, Conway becoming the head of the new Circuit, with two ministers in each. The Rev. John Davies, who is now travelling in the Preston, Lune Street, Circuit, and E. B. Jones, an able preacher in the Cardiff, Loudoun Square, Circuit, were brought up in this church, together with many good Christians whose names are written in the Book of Life.

Llysfaen, in the Abergel Circuit, was visited by Mr. Bryan in 1802. Mary Hughes, living at Galchogfach, had occasion to go to Prestatyn, and there heard Mr. Bryan preach. She was converted under that sermon, and then went to the preacher and invited him to come to preach at Llysfaen, which he accepted, and the following Sunday morning he preached there to a large congregation. He was so encouraged that he was there again a fortnight later, and was welcomed to the house of Evan Jones, an uncle of Evan Jones of Rhuddlan. Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) soon afterwards

came to Llysfaen, and organized the Society there, the preaching being at the large hall (Neuadd-fawr). The first members were William Evans (Felin-y-pentre), the village mill ; William Evans, Caehen ; Evan Jones, Trawscoed ; Hugh, William, and Annie Cole ; Williams, Penmaen ; Owen Roberts, Bron-r-hwylfa ; Hugh Evans, smith, and his wife ; Elizabeth Williams, Tymawr ; and Mary Hughes, who invited Mr. Bryan to the neighbourhood. Mr. Robert Owen came to Llysfaen from Dawn to lead the class, and was a most diligent, consistent, and useful leader till 1811, when he was called to the ministry. In 1803 a site was procured in a place called Red Hills (Bryniau-cochion), and the following year the new chapel was opened for divine worship, when several substantial men became trustees, including Mr. Thomas Griffith, Plas Newydd ; O. Jones, Tymawr ; Thomas Davies, Penycoed ; W. Williams ; and R. Davies, Isallt. The opening of the new chapel was the beginning of a period of persistent persecution. The vicar of the parish did not leave a stone unturned in order to destroy the work of the Methodists. He carried his opposition so far that his own people became disgusted with him, and many of them left his church and joined the Wesleyans. Meeting Mr. Edward Jones, Corwen, the enraged clergyman asked him, ‘Are you the interlude fool that was at the Wesleyan chapel last night?’ and before the Wesleyan preacher had time to answer the question he asked again, ‘Have you a licence?’ Mr. Jones calmly replied that he was not aware that a licence was necessary to play an interlude. Finding that ridicule and persecution were in vain, other methods were resorted to, but the people became so disappointed with the vicar that they left him and his sexton to themselves, while the persecuted Wesleyans extended their borders, and were greatly owned of God. Llysfaen was one of the places where the ‘five points’ were frequently discussed, the Calvinists and the Wesleyans becoming so heated that on one occasion, on a fair day at

Abergele, a free fight followed, which disgraced both sides, and especially the cause of Christ.

In 1827 it was found necessary to enlarge the chapel, which again became too small, and has been enlarged and improved more than once since. The Llysfaen Church was long represented in the ministry by the Rev. Robert Owen, who after a long and exemplary career died in peace at Aberayron. O. Foulkes, H. Evans, and J. Evans rendered faithful service as local preachers. A very interesting feature in connection with the Llysfaen Society is that the old families are still represented. The sons take the place of the fathers, and the daughters carry on the good work of the mothers, to the third and fourth generation.

Mr. Bryan preached on a Sunday afternoon on the mountain near a place called the New Public House, in the parish of Llanelian, to a large company of people, with most gratifying results. Many in the congregation were crying aloud in great agony of mind, and that day decided to live for Christ. A room was immediately taken in a house called Bryn-neuadd, in the village of Dawn. Mr. John Jones, Corwen, visited the place soon afterwards, and formed a Society there. The first members were Joshua Jones (Pandy), John Jones, Robert Jones, Robert Williams, Robert Jones (2nd), Robert Owen, and Evan Evans. The first named was appointed leader. This little Society suffered considerably in consequence of removals. Joshua Jones removed to Eglwysfach, and Robert Owen to Llysfaen—both did good service in their new places, but Dawn felt the loss, and continued feeble. John Jones, Dawn, was for a short period a class-leader, then William Jones, the weaver, who was succeeded by W. Jones, Lloc, and afterwards by Mr. John Bartley. In 1829 William Jones, Tanyllwyfan, was appointed class-leader, and the work began to grow more satisfactorily. In 1837 a chapel was erected, and several families became identified with the Wesleyan Society, including John Williams, The Glyn;

William Evans, Ty-n-Wal ; John Pritchard, Moses Williams, and John Owen. Joseph Owen became a very useful local preacher. The population in the village has decreased, many of the old landmarks have been removed in Wales, like other countries, the small proprietorships have given place to larger farms worked by fewer people, but the Society is comparatively prosperous.

Bettws is probably a Welshified name of *bead-house*, an ecclesiastical term signifying a hospital or alms-house, where the poor prayed for their founders and benefactors. There are several such places in Wales, but they are generally found on the way to an abbey. Bettws, Abergele, was visited by Mr. Ellis Owen of Llansanan, who took his stand on the road and preached to a group of the inhabitants. Robert Roberts, Bonwn, was the next Wesleyan preacher to visit the place ; Jones (Bathafarn), S. Games, and others visited the village, but for some time the results were not equal to those in other places. Late in 1804 a schoolroom, which had been used by the vicar as a high-class school, was rented, and Robert Hughes came from Pwllheli to keep school there, and was appointed class-leader. Owen Williams (Penfforddeg), Robert Jones, Richard Williams, Richard Thomas, Elizabeth Jones, Elizabeth Lloyd, Jane Ellis, Ellen Owen, the Farm, formed the Society ; and they were soon followed by Anne and Gwen Foulkes. Samuel Davies (1st) and Lot Hughes assisted the work in this place before they entered the ministry. Richard Bartley, who came to live at Bodrochwyn, was for years a faithful class-leader. The old schoolroom was the place of meeting. In 1832 a site was bought of Mr. Foulkes of Peniarth-fawr for £30, and the chapel was opened for divine worship on the 26th December of that year. Robert Roberts, D. Roberts, W. Evans (Brynmorfydd), Henry Jones (Bettws), John Bartley were the local trustees. More recently, William Evans and John Jones were the class-leaders, and for a small village there is a substantial Society, which has worked well.

Moelfre (Baldhill) was visited by the Wesleyan preachers about the same time. Some of the inhabitants of this neighbourhood had heard Jones (Bathafarn) and Bryan at Abergel, and identified themselves with the Society there at an earlier period. John Foulkes, at the request of some of the friends, preached at Moelfre on a Saturday night in 1803. The boyish appearance of the preacher, his earnestness and power in prayer, as he stood on the chair near the Glan-dyfir, then occupied by William Jones, at the beginning of his service on that Saturday night, melted the hearts of his congregation, and produced a lasting effect. The Society was formed, William Jones and his wife, Peter Jones and his wife, Hugh Jones—who shortly after began to preach—and Mary and Elizabeth Jones being the pioneers. The members were not numerous, but they were thoroughly united and spiritually strong. Robert Davies and his wife came to live at Penymynydd. John Bartley was a member at Moelfre, and began to preach here; he afterwards entered the ministry in 1830, and laboured with success up to the time of his death on February 19, 1884. He was a man of sound judgment, of retentive memory, a good theologian, and his sermons were often delivered with great power and unction, and many were the seals of his ministry. Owen Owens, St. George, identified himself with the Society. Many attempts were unsuccessfully made to secure a site, but without success till 1836. That year the chapel was erected, and on the 12th October was dedicated to the worship of God, and the Wesleyans at Moelfre secured a home.

Llanfair-Talhaiarn. Ellis Owen of Llansanan was the first Wesleyan preacher to visit this village on a Sunday afternoon in 1804, and the Society there was formed the following year by Mr. Bryan. The little flock met to worship from time to time in the house of William Jones. The members of the class were Mrs. Jones, Morris Williams and his daughter Anne; Elizabeth Jones, Penybrynn; Edward Jones, Brynseion;

Elizabeth Foulkes, Cefn ; David Williams, Plasbela, and his brother William, who had identified himself with the Welsh Wesleyans in Liverpool some time before, and now having returned to his native place became class-leader, although living at the time at Llansanan. Robert Williams, a local preacher, was for some time a valuable helper of the Society at Llanfair. Mr. Richard Jones, saddler, Denbigh, who inherited through his wife some property in the locality, removed to Llanfair, and being leader and preacher was a great help to the cause. He died at Rhyl, March 10, 1854. The chapel was erected in 1807, and proved a comfortable home for thirty years. In 1837 there was a revival of religion in this place, and many were brought to the saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. The converts included John Hughes, of the Swan, who became a most active and successful leader at Llanfair, and after that at Rhyl ; William Jones, who up to his death was a most exemplary Christian and class-leader ; Edward Hughes and John Williams, all prominently connected with the work of God. The chapel was filled, and the need of another felt. In 1839 a site was secured after a prolonged and most unworthy attempt on the part of an agent, who was a bigoted professor among the Calvinists, to prevent the Wesleyans having it ; and a chapel was erected, much larger, more comfortable, and attractive. The difficulties, the opposition, and the dishonest scheming with which the Rev. Richard Pritchard had to contend, in connection with this case, drew out his sterling qualities, which, when contrasted with those of the agent, as discovered by the landowner and made known to the public, reflected great credit upon the Wesleyan minister, as well as upon the Society in the place. The work prospered in the new chapel. Mr. J. T. Davies, son of the Rev. Samuel Davies (1st), was a great support to the work at Llanfair during his stay there. Mr. David Williams, who removed thither from Colwyn, with Isaac Williams, were the class-

leaders, and with William Jones made up a strong trio, under whose guidance the work steadily progressed. More recently, Mr. William Griffiths, local preacher, leader, etc., has done good work at Llanfair. Like many other village Societies, it has proved a good nursery for other churches. This little stream, with its crystal waters, has been flowing unceasingly, supplying other places with good and true Christians.

Salem-Rhyd-y-foel Society was not formed till about the year 1820. The Rev. David Jones (2nd), who intended preaching at Llanddulas in 1812, but was prevented by the vicar, crossed the parish boundary, and preached with great power in the neighbourhood of Salem. Some years after, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Jones, who had been identified with the Wesleyans at Llanfair-Talhaiarn, came to live at Hafod-wryd. Although members at Bettws, they were unable to attend the services very often, hence they had preaching and prayer-meetings at their own house. Thomas Morris was appointed the first class-leader, there being eight members of Society. The leader had three miles to walk to every meeting he attended, but the blessings received at the class, prayer, and other meetings more than paid for the six miles' walk, notwithstanding his advanced years. The little Society received considerable attention from the Rev. Hugh Hughes when he had charge of the Circuit, with satisfactory results, and a chapel was erected in 1825, which became too small, was again enlarged in 1831, and again in 1844. Mr. John Hughes, Shop, Llanddulas, and his family joined the Society at Salem, having previously been connected with Llysfaen, and their house became the preachers' home, and their zeal and devotion towards the work of God abounded always.

They succeeded in making Salem one of the most attractive places both for preachers and people. Ministers and local preachers were so heartily welcomed and so kindly treated that they were always pleased to go and preach there.

Leaders and stewards often forget that preachers are human and subject to such infirmities as other men. Mr. and Mrs. Hughes were fully alive to the fact, and considered it their privilege to make them as homely and comfortable as possible. As a result, preachers had more confidence, and were better able to do their work, and went away feeling thankful and blessed, and looking forward with pleasure to the time for visiting the place again. There are districts where preachers always have pleasure in doing their work ; Salem was one of those places. This good family is still largely represented in prominent positions in the Methodist Church in Liverpool, Llanelly, Colwyn Bay, Anglesea ; and the loving loyalty to Methodist preachers which characterized the old family at Llanddulas is fully sustained by their descendants. Mr. Griffiths, Porth, was another who took a similar view, and whose comfortable home was an attraction to Methodist preachers. The old leaders, R. Roberts and Thomas Jones, were men of sterling piety. Peter Jones, too, was perhaps one of the best men ever connected with the Society—generous, zealous, intelligent, reliable, a tower of strength. David Evans was a good class-leader ; William Williams, a typical local preacher, who, after some years of work in Liverpool, returned to the old place to die, trusting in Christ. Few churches in similar districts have accomplished more substantial work or will have better results to report than Salem-Rhyd-y-foel. As the Rev. Lot Hughes said, quoting from the Psalm, ‘In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling-place in Zion.’

Llanrwst, a town which is situated in one of the most charming spots in the Vale of Conway, was visited by Jones (Bathafarn) and Mr. Bryan in 1802, and they preached in the yard of Union Tavern in Bridge Street. The appearance of the two preachers representing the new sect, which was so generally spoken against, speedily became the one topic of conversation. A Mr. William Jones, a linen weaver, was

asked what he thought about them, and replied, ‘They are two men dressed in the clothes of the two men who were hung on the scaffold at Ruthin a short time ago.’ This reply caused a great deal of ridicule, and awakened the superstitions of some, but it also effectively recoiled upon the head of the man who made it. The Wesleyan preachers had a large company to hear them preach, the services made a great impression, and they were earnestly implored to visit Llanrwst again as early as possible. When Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) preached at Llanrwst the next time, William Jones, whose conscience had been very uneasy, went to hear the Wesleyan preacher; he was a fine, tall, and handsome-looking man, of tender feelings, and on that occasion was prepared to receive the Word of God. As Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) preached the gospel of free and present salvation with sweetness and power, the man’s heart was melted, and the tears flowed streaming down his cheeks; the sight attracted the attention of those present, and left a deep impression upon the minds of many. He joined the people he had despised, and became a faithful worker. Returning from Carnarvon in 1803, Mr. John Hughes visited Llanrwst, and notwithstanding the heavy rain, stood up in the street and preached to a large crowd of people, taking no notice of the inclement weather beyond the fact that he kept his hat on his head. There was present in the crowd that day an old lady called Dorothy Pierce, Rhibo, who was then eighty years of age, who said, ‘Well, these are the people I have looked for; this is the doctrine I believe, because I find it in my Bible.’ She died July 5, 1809, rejoicing in Christ as her Saviour. During the six years she had been connected with the Wesleyans her testimony and joy in the Holy Ghost had often been made a blessing to many others. The preaching was now removed to the yard of William Thomas, the baker, in Denbigh Street; the Society meeting in a small cottage in the same street. William Thomas had joined the little flock, and took great

interest in the work. About the same time John and Grace Williams became members of the Society, and for many years were devoted labourers. In 1804 a chapel was erected in what is known as the lower end of the town, Evan Roberts, Denbigh, and Ellis Owen, both local preachers, being the builders. The opening services were held on October 12 and 13 that year, Messrs. Owen Davies, Jones (Bathafarn), Bryan, Batten, and others taking part. On Easter Sunday and Monday, 1806, Dr. Coke preached at Llanrwst, Jones (Bathafarn), Games, and W. Jones taking a part with the doctor in the services. The day was looked upon as one of great grace, and often referred to in after years by the old people.

In 1809 Llanrwst was made the head of a Circuit, William Evans being the first superintendent, with John Rogers as his colleague. From 1816 to 1834, with the exception of one year, it was included with the Denbigh Circuit. In 1837 the old chapel was enlarged, a new gallery erected, a vestry and a minister's house built. The scheme involved considerable outlay, but was successfully accomplished. The Society has not, however, always experienced smooth sailing ; it has had more storms than other similar churches ; but it has held its own, raised up many preachers, and of late years renewed its vigour and youth. In 1883 a new chapel was erected at Llanrwst, largely through the efforts of the Rev. Edward Humphreys, who was then superintendent of the Circuit, which, but for its nearness to the street, is everything that could be desired. Amongst its members should be mentioned John Williams (1st), who entered the ministry in 1805, and died at Carmarthen ; John Evans (A), who entered the ministry in 1846, and died at Mold, December 1882,—he was one of the most genial of men, and a plodding, careful, and devoted minister of the gospel, greatly revered and lamented ; Owen Lloyd Davies, who for many years has done good work in the best Circuits in the district ; Henry Hughes,

Peter Roberts, Isaiah Jones, John Howell Jones, the two last mentioned being in the English work. David Jones (c), who entered the ministry in 1872, and died suddenly returning from a meeting in company with his superintendent, September 17, 1891, in the twentieth year of his ministry, was an evangelical, pathetic, and effective preacher, greatly beloved by his people; a poet of no mean order, and of varied and eminently practical literary talents. All these men were trained in the Llanrwst Church, and form a group of whom any church might feel proud. J. Griffith, R. Owen, O. C. Owen, and T. Roberts were useful local preachers, some of whom did great and permanent service, and will long be remembered by their works.

When Mr. Bryan in 1802 preached on the mountain near the New Tavern, there were present some who had come from Eglwysfach, a small village surrounded by hills on the southern side of the Conway River, and who were so impressed by the preacher, his doctrine, and the service, that they made up their minds to do all in their power to bring the Wesleyan preachers to their own village. Mr. Ellis Owen was the first Wesleyan preacher who came, and he was invited to the house of Absalom Roberts, known as 'The Poet.' The people were generally careless about spiritual and eternal realities, and very little was accomplished. There was a difficulty in finding a home for the preacher or a place in which to worship, and they were almost decided to give up visiting Eglwysfach, and to devote attention to other places where greater prosperity might be expected. There was then living at a farmhouse called the Crow's Hill (Bryn-y-fran) a woman who had been for three years under great affliction. Visited one day by a neighbour and talking about various matters, the sick woman was told about the 'new sect,' and that they were going to withdraw from the village because no one would take them in. Mrs. Owen, the afflicted woman of Crow's Hill, had never seen the Wesleyan preachers, but she

was pained to hear that there was a probability of losing their ministrations because no one would take them in ; she mentioned the matter to her husband, and he consented that they should have a home and preach in their house. The Wesleyan preachers were invited ; Mr. Edward Jones (2nd), Corwen, came and held a service, after which, and just before retiring for the night, the preacher prayed by the bedside of the afflicted wife with marvellous power. The woman felt a change in body and mind, and the next day she was able to rise out of bed, and up to the time of her death, January 2, 1817, she was able, excepting very occasionally, to attend to her household duties. This incident was effective in changing the public opinion throughout the neighbourhood. The preachers were looked upon as the servants of God, and the people were glad to see and to welcome into their village the ‘new sect.’ A cottage was rented, in which services were regularly held up to the year 1806, when a chapel was built. The services in connection with the opening of the chapel were conducted by Messrs. Edward Jones (2nd), J. Bryan, John Jones (Corwen), and W. Parry (Llandegai), and it was a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. The singing of a hymn, 776, by Messrs. Bryan and Jones to a tune new to the Welsh people, probably never heard in the locality before, melted the congregation into tears, followed by praises, shouts of ‘ Glory ! ’ ‘ Hallelujah ! ’ etc., and the results were most gratifying. The Rev. Lot Hughes, then a young man beginning to preach, removed to live in the village, and with Joshua Jones of Dawn was made class - leader. Mr. Hughes conducted services night after night in the farmhouses and cottages, inviting the people to the chapel, and the word of the Lord had free course. Two Society classes were formed, several of the leading families joined, amongst them John Owen, Elizabeth Roberts, Thomas and John Wynne, Mary Davies, Maesyrhendre ; John Jones, Nantcollen ; William Jones, Nant-

y-rhaglaw ; and John Wynne, the latter becoming a local preacher. The removal of Mr. C. Foulkes, a local preacher and a most useful and devoted man, to the neighbourhood was a great encouragement to the Society in a time of trouble. His memory will long be fragrant. In 1824, when the Rev. Hugh Hughes was the superintendent of the Circuit, the chapel was renovated and enlarged, and in 1830 had become too small and was again enlarged. In 1838, for the same reason, a gallery was erected, and the chapel again filled. About the end of 1860 the Eglwysfach Chapel for the fourth time was enlarged, and the work has been steadily progressing. Messrs. O. Owens, Robert Wynne, and more recently John Evans (B) became useful preachers ; the latter entered the ministry in 1861, and his power as a preacher of the gospel is well known in England and America, but especially in the Principality. His *Life of Wesley*, his published sermons, and other works in the Welsh language, are highly appreciated, and will live with the vernacular ; but beyond this, the church at Eglwysfach will ever have reason to be proud that it brought up one of the ablest preachers in the Welsh language.

The Society has been led by men of ability and character. Mr. Jones of Tanrallt, whose daughter is the wife of the Rev. Evan Evans ; Williams, Bryn-y-fran ; Mr. Roberts, Penybrynn, whose daughters became the wives of the Rev. James Evans and R. Lloyd Jones, were all devotedly attached and attentive to the interests of Methodism in their Society and Circuit, and their wisdom and generosity will long live and be kindly spoken of by the inhabitants of Eglwysfach. The financial District meeting of 1847 was held in this village.

Penmachno is in the Llanrwst Circuit but in the county of Carnarvon, on the borders of Denbigh and Merioneth, and Methodistically its connection is with the Circuit town more than the county in which it is included. *Machno* is the name of the river—a mutation of Machnawf—*mach*, ready,

quick, swift ; and *nauf*, swim. The English name given by the Rev. Thomas Morgan is Swifton, the swiftness of the river being well known to all who have seen it. Dr. Morgan, the translator of the Welsh Bible, was a native of Penmachno, and his name will be revered by Welsh people while memory endures. In 1806 Ellis Owen of Llansanan visited this village, and taking his stand near the almshouse preached the first Methodist sermon in his native place. Shortly afterwards, Mr. William Jones (Llanelidan) and Richard Jones (Trawsfynydd) preached at Penmachno. Mr. Robert Humphreys, then stationed at Dolgelly, visited the village, and after the sermon, which had made a deep impression, invited those who wished to flee from the wrath to come to meet him in an old cottage in the village. David Jones, the weaver, Jane Roberts, David Davies and his wife, accepted the invitation, and became the first members. Jane Owen, Owen Jones, and others soon followed. The Wesleyans of Penmachno were subjected to ridicule, persecution, and false representation, in consequence of which they were glad to have shelter in the house of Mr. Hugh Price, who befriended them. David Jones, Cefn-brith, grandfather of the Rev. David Jones (4th), who used to travel every week twelve miles over mountains through rough and fine weather in order to assist, encourage, and lead the despised Wesleyans of Penmachno, rendered invaluable service to the little Society. In 1808 a site for a chapel was bought of Mr. Richard Parry for £20, Mr. Hugh Carter, Denbigh, William Jones, Cadwalader Price, David Jones, Caellwyd, S. Morris, and Ellis Jones, schoolmaster, Maentwrog, being trustees. The chapel was opened for divine service during the year by Mr. Bryan and Richard Williams, Dolgelly. Penmachno was included in the Dolgelly Circuit, of which Mr. Bryan was that year superintendent. There were discussions going on continually in this neighbourhood on the five points. When the Rev. Hugh Hughes, then a young man, was preaching here, he said that it was possible

for a man to fall from grace. As he uttered these words a young woman in the congregation read aloud, ‘Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ Himself.’ Mr. Hughes could see others that were very uneasy, so he ventured to say he would meet the young woman and any of her friends to discuss the matter the next morning. One man said he would rather hear the preacher curse and swear than utter such blasphemies. The next morning crowds of people came together, and Mr. Hughes defended himself and his doctrine so ably that whenever he came to that neighbourhood he was sure of a large congregation. The anniversary has been held regularly up to the present time on Whit-Sunday and Monday, and it is one of the great gatherings which has been greatly owned of God. In 1818 the meeting was being held in the chapel, and in the village was the parish wake—both almost within sound of each other. The preaching was owned of God. A great melting power descended on the congregation; and the sound of praise was heard, followed by cries of ‘Glory to God!—‘Gogoniant! ’ ‘Diolch iddo! ’ ‘Bendigedig! ’ The shouts of praise reached the ‘tents of wickedness,’ the fiddler and harpist and dancer lost their companions one by one, and the dancing was given up. Even the players themselves were attracted to the chapel, where the people were praising God. A young woman, who had come from Llanrwst and who had been taking part in the dance, drew out of her hat a feather, threw it down, and cried out, ‘Farewell, old Roger the fiddler, for ever and ever.’ The impression was marvellous, and the work greatly prospered after this meeting. The leaders at Penmachno were Owen Luke and Owen Jones, and in later years Robert Jones, W. Roberts, Richard Griffiths, Ellis Williams, and David Jones. The Penmachno Society has been well represented in the ministry of the Wesleyan Church. The Rev. Robert Jones (A), who entered the ministry in 1841, and up to the time of his death (August

25, 1878) was a most exemplary, acceptable, useful, evangelical, and greatly esteemed preacher of the gospel, travelled many of the best Circuits in the North Wales District, and whose son, the Rev. R. Lloyd Jones, is in the ministry, was brought up at Penmachno. Thomas Roberts, who began to travel in 1870, was full of promise, but was taken to a fairer clime on January 31, 1872; O. M. Jones, who entered the ministry in 1876, but who died August 15, 1882—both young men of beautiful character, were from this church. D. O. Jones, J. Price Roberts, J. E. Roberts, Owen Evans, who are occupying prominent positions in the Welsh Wesleyan ministry to-day, claim Penmachno as their mother church. Some acceptable local preachers have also been trained here; David Jones, W. Jones, David Cadwalader, and Rees Jones did good service in this and other churches in the Circuit, and will be long remembered by what they have done.

In recent years the Society has grown considerably. There is now a large and commodious chapel, a strong active church, a large congregation, and a minister stationed in the village. The minister's house was the gift of Mr. Owen Gethin Jones, either himself or in conjunction with his family. Gethin Jones was an eminent Welsh bard, whose epic compositions were acknowledged as of high merit. One of his daughters is the wife of the Rev. Edward Humphreys. Mr. Owen Jones, Glasgwm Hall, father of the Rev. D. O. Jones, has long stood well by the cause, in connection with which he has been a tower of strength.

Penmachno Wesleyans have been earnest workers, and, finding that a small village was springing up in the valley near Garog Quarry, they commenced a Sunday school there, and in 1853 a chapel was erected, which has since been enlarged and another schoolroom built higher up the valley. The Cwm Society has been blessed with some most useful leaders, men of exceptional ability and real genius. John

Price, Griffith Owen, Robert Owen, John Humphreys, D. R. Jones, and W. Roberts are names that will live in the religious life of the people of this valley for generations to come,—mighty in the Scriptures, in prayer, as well as in their influence over their fellow-men. There are many good men still connected with this Society and with those who have passed away; they can rejoice in the steady growth of the church, and in the conversion of nearly all the inhabitants of the valley. This Society has been the scene of some marvellous manifestations of divine power, and the arm of the Lord has been made bare, and a work of grace has commenced which has reached other churches in other localities.

At Capel Garmon a small chapel was erected in a thinly-populated district a mile and a half from the charming village of Bettws-y-coed, which had a long struggle for existence. It had become so weak that there was only one man who could open and close the Sunday school with prayer. Week after week he performed this duty, but eventually lost heart and spiritual power, and on one occasion allowed the Sunday school, which was small, to go on without an opening prayer. This so aroused the feelings of one zealous if unconverted hearer, that at the end of the lesson for the day he went up to the faint-hearted professor, and asked him if he was not ashamed of himself to allow the school to be conducted without prayer. He spoke to him so plainly and pointedly, with so much earnestness, that the poor professor was pricked to the heart. To be told that he must live better, pray more, and work harder, and that by a man of the world, almost overwhelmed him. He felt ashamed of himself, and said he would rather die than stand in the way of the cause of God. On his way home from school that Sunday afternoon with a heavy heart, afraid of showing his face, he went over the hedge into the field, and then and there he earnestly prayed that God would either end him or mend him. He came away

like Jacob, a prince with God, the consciousness of victory in his heart, and he went home rejoicing. The next Sunday he prayed with marvellous power, and in that small place there were nineteen who gave their hearts to Christ. The work progressed by leaps and bounds; the chapel became too small, was enlarged, became too small again, and in 1887 a new chapel was erected under the superintendency of the Rev. W. H. Evans. This is a convenient, commodious, and attractive building, and the present writer will never forget the old leader telling the incident recorded above. It was at one of the services in connection with the opening of the present chapel. The old man was feeble and aged. He stood on the brink of the river, but his face shone as he described his victory in the field, and the wonderful growth of the work of God in that neighbourhood during the nearly forty years which had elapsed since that memorable Sabbath.

There are small chapels at Tregynwall, Nebo, and Dolwyddelan, in each of which there are a few persons who, by faithful, firm, and active service, have kept Methodism alive, and who, although unknown to the world outside, are doing substantial work for Christ which will redound to the glory of God in the 'day He shall make up His jewels.'

Llangollen, in the beautiful valley of Dyfrdwy, one of the most picturesque spots in the Principality, was probably visited by Evan Roberts, Denbigh, as early as 1791, while on his way to Oswestry. Mr. Roberts took his stand in the street, and began to sing. His melodious voice attracted the attention of the inhabitants, and he was quickly surrounded by a crowd of people. Immediately after he had commenced his sermon, a man rushed up and endeavoured to stop the discourse. This attempt to molest the stranger aroused the ire of one of the hearers, who went up to the disturber, and, taking him by the collar, sent him about his business in rather a hasty manner, and the preacher was allowed to go on and finish his sermon. The people were so pleased with

the service that they made a collection, which they gave the Wesleyan preacher. Mr. Roberts, however, did not need their money, and disbursed it to the poor people in the town. It is not known that another visit was made to Llangollen before August 26, 1801, when Mr. Bryan preached. After the service he said if there were any present who would open their doors to welcome them, the Wesleyan preachers would come again. This appeal drew out many invitations. Mr. Bryan was in Llangollen shortly afterwards, and preached with exceptional power. Among others who were then converted was John Jones, the Llangollen miller, a well-known cock-fighter, who, going home from the service, took up his hatchet, and cut off the heads of ten of the finest birds probably in the county. His wife, hearing the noise, went out to the yard, and, seeing the ten heads, said to her husband that it would have been better if he had killed them one by one, so that they might cook them. ‘Oh no,’ was the husband’s reply; ‘I was afraid they would be a temptation to me if I kept any of them. To kill them all at once was best for me.’ The Llangollen miller identified himself with God’s people without hesitation or delay, and he remained faithful up to the time of his death. A fortnight afterwards Mr. John Hughes preached in the house of Anne Williams in Tanyfynwent Street. Messrs. Bryan, John Jones (Corwen), and David Rogers visited Llangollen, and the message was owned of God each time. In 1802 Jones (Bathafarn) formed a Society in the house of Anne Williams, and David Rogers was the first leader. The first members were John Jones and his wife; Mr. J. Bowen, Dinbren, and his wife; J. Edwards, the shoemaker, and his wife; J. Williams, Wern-uwchaf; Mary Edwards, Plas Ifan, and her two daughters; Mr. and Mrs. Edward Williams; Edward Jones of Llandysilio. Shortly after, D. Williams, chandler, and Morris Jones joined the Methodist Society. In 1804 they felt their need of a place of worship. A site was secured in a fairly convenient

place, and the first chapel for the Wesleyans was opened that year, Owen Davies, Jones (Bathafarn), and Bryan preaching on the occasion. The Society was united and active, and they prospered in their work. In 1806 Llangollen was made the head of a Circuit, John Maurice and John Davies being the ministers. When Mr. David Rogers left for another sphere, Edward Jones took charge of the class. In 1841 a new chapel on a new site was erected, and on the 4th, 5th, and 6th of April that year a series of services were held, the Revs. Thomas Aubrey, Rowland Hughes, Dr. Beaumont, William Rowland, and others taking part. Messrs. H. Bowen, Morris Roberts, Robert Hughes, Edward Hughes, John Jones, and John Griffith were the trustees. These good men and their families were able to render to Christ, through the Methodist Church, services of the highest order, and, with others, will long be remembered for their work's sake. Messrs. Edward Edwards, John Price, John Thomas, Edward Roberts, and John Roberts were zealous local preachers. The chapel has been renovated more recently, and a minister's house erected. Edward Jones, who was living at Llandysilio, was a member and class-leader at Llangollen, entered the ministry in 1805, and, as we have mentioned elsewhere, was for many years one of the ablest and most persistent defenders of Methodism, and especially of its doctrines. John Simon was a native of Llandysilio, and father of the Rev. J. S. Simon, who entered the ministry in 1831 and died at Jersey in 1861. Mr. Simon, who was blessed with a fine voice, good presence, with a blending of the logical and rhetorical, altogether a powerful preacher, after a few years went over to the English work, in which he continued up to the time of his death. Maurice Jones, who entered the ministry in 1806 and retired in 1817, was one of the first group who joined the Methodists at Llangollen. He left the Connexion for some years and joined the agitators in 1832, but repented, wrote to the chairman of the District expressing

his regret for the mistake he made, and, like many others, came back to the Methodist Church as a member before his death in 1840. The Llangollen Society has had a more steady course than many others in the Principality, and has held its own up to the present time. There is now a good chapel for the Welsh, and a commodious one for those who prefer the English language. The sons fill the positions of their fathers and the daughters of their mothers, and Methodism is in a better position to carry on the great mission of spreading holiness through the land.

Cefnmawr (Highridge), which was included in the Llangollen Circuit till it was made the head of a Circuit in 1878, is situated on a ridge overlooking the Wynnestay Park on the one hand, and the Vale of Llangollen with the Crow Castle on the other, and gives the inhabitants an opportunity of seeing one of the most charming views in the county. This place was first visited by the English preachers, some times from Chester, and other times from Shrewsbury, but no Society was formed or regular preaching established. In 1804 Messrs. W. Batten and Stephen Games preached in the house of Mr. Thomas Williams, living at Derwen (Oak), the father of Mr. Edward Williams, Derwen Hall, and afterwards at the house of Mr. John Wright of Acarfair. Lot Hughes preached frequently at Cefn, Street Isa, and at Ruabon in 1808. Mr. Robert Saddler converted an old shed near his house into a preaching room, and it was used for some time. The first members of the Society were John Wright and his wife, Edward Edwards and his wife, Evan Hughes and Mrs. Hughes, John and Mrs. Blunt, Mary Prydderch, Ellen Pritchard, and probably a few others. John Rogers of Ruabon, who entered the ministry in 1807, and in 1816 went over to the English work, and died at Barnstable, April 14, 1849, was probably one of the first group, though his name is not given by the Rev. Lot Hughes. A small English chapel was erected early in the present century, which was sometimes

lent to the Welsh section to worship in. On one occasion the Welsh and English were together, and a Mr. Stephenson, a local preacher from Brymbo, conducting the service, when they heard a great noise. Knowing it was not thunder, the people were terribly frightened, and rushed out of the little chapel, and as the last got outside the end fell in and the building was in ruins in a short time. The chapel was erected over an old coalpit, hence the subsidence, but no one was seriously injured. In 1815 a chapel was erected for the Welsh Society, in connection with which John Bellis and Edward Bowen gave considerable time, attention, and money, and found great satisfaction in the successful triumph of the cause. In 1826 the same fate met the Welsh chapel as that which resulted in the ruin of the English. Two of the men, Edward Davies and Edward Pritchard, anxious to save the books, benches, and other articles of furniture, had a very narrow escape. It was a most mysterious incident, two chapels belonging to the same denomination in the same village falling to ruins in a similar way. The friends were greatly disheartened. It was difficult to get a site, and the clergyman did everything in his power to put an end to Wesleyan Methodism in the parish.

After two years of wandering from cottage to cottage, a site was bought of Mr. Griffith for £40, and a good substantial chapel built in 1828, and the efforts of the people met with such responses that the debt was only £300. Messrs. T. Williams, R. Lloyd, J. Jones, W. Batten, G. Davies, H. Evans, and T. Rees were the trustees, and they worked hard and well to reduce the debt. Mr. Lloyd of Tymaen was so satisfied with their efforts, that he gave the last £190, and the chapel was free. The chapel has been enlarged and galleries erected, and Cefnmawr has been made the head of a Circuit. Mr. Lloyd was for many years a class-leader and a most generous supporter of the cause. In his later years he removed farther away from Cefnmawr, and, faithful to his

principles, not finding a Wesleyan chapel sufficiently near in which to worship God, he erected at his own cost and presented to the Connexion the chapel in that Circuit known as Jubilee—the jubilee of the introduction of Welsh Wesleyan Methodism into Wales. He died in 1856, aged sixty-five.

Jonathan Jones, like his father before him, became a great help to the work, filling the various offices in the church, and showing a good, robust character behind all. Ellis Hughes, Edward Pritchard, Evan Hughes, and Thomas Williams were all men of sterling worth. John Jones, Robert Hughes, Rowland Davies, Edward Edwards, John Evans (brother of the Rev. Evan Evans), D. Edwards, afterwards of Llanfyllin ; Isaac Jones, who went to Earlstown ; David Jones, who went to Bolton ; and Edward Bowen, who went to Stockton ; Richard Evans, Richard Williams, Richard Edwards, Thomas Tranter, W. Jones, and W. Lloyd were local preachers connected with the Cefn Society, and were men who travelled in their own and adjoining Circuits, and contributed largely towards building up Methodism in that neighbourhood. Needless to say, as the result of the united efforts of ministers, preachers, leaders, and members, there is in Cefnmawr a good substantial Methodist cause.

There are small chapels on this side of the county at Street Isa, Glyndyfrdwy, Rhewl, Pentredwr, and Glynceirig ; each has a Society and a few of the faithful who often do better work, make greater sacrifices in the interest of religion, and hereafter will have a brighter reward, than men who are known in larger Circuits and occupy more prominent positions.

There are now in Denbighshire seven Circuits, with a goodly array of ministers and preachers, a number of active Societies, and no opposition. The doctrines preached by Jones (Bathafarn), by Bryan, by John Hughes, and by Owen Davies in the beginning of the present century are proclaimed from the pulpits of all the other denominations ; while many

acknowledge the excellences of the Wesleyan economy. Welsh Wesleyans will ever look back to this county as the cradle of their Church in Wales, and will trace the merciful providence of God in leading Jones (Bathafarn) round Manchester to his work, and especially in the raising up of the band of preachers who were destined to revolutionise the teachings of the Welsh pulpit.

CHAPTER XX.

FLINTSHIRE.

First Calvinistic Methodist Chapel in North Wales—Bryngwyn Society—Northop—Richard Harrison—Halkin—Earl Grosvenor's Agent—Persecution—Mold—Mr. Wesley's Visits—Pendre Chapel—Robert Harrison—Holywell—Bryan—Determination to Murder him—Failure of Attempt—Robert Morris—New Circuit—William Jacob—The Easter Anniversary—Flint—Samuel Davies (1st)—Caerwys—Ysgeifiog—Bagillt—Richard Gratton—Llanasa—Edward Pritchard—Dyserth—Galltmelyd—Cwm—Parry, Tanybryn—Lord Mostyn—Rhuddlan—Evan Jones—Prestatyn—English Chapel—Rhyd—Society and New Chapels—English Chapel—F. Payne—Local Preachers—Mwnglawdd—Diligence of the Early Methodists—Coedpoeth—Difficulties with the Chapel—Struggles—Brymbo—Closing the Chapel—Other New Chapels—Leeswood—Treuddyn—Hope—Ministers from this County—John Hugh Evans—Success o Methodism, etc.

ALTHOUGH one of the smallest of the Welsh counties, Flintshire has many attractions, and Methodistically has taken a good position from the beginning. Within its boundaries Matthew Henry, Thomas Pennant, and several eminent Wesleyans were born. In this county the Calvinistic Methodists built their first chapel in North Wales, and Wesleyan Methodism is probably stronger in proportion to the population in Flint than in any other county in the Principality. The ministers appointed to the Chester Circuit regularly visited certain places in this county years before the establishment of Welsh Methodism. A small Society was formed at Bryngwyn as early as March 4, 1770, and Richard Harrison became a member. The services were held in a house called Jamaica, which stands on the way from

Northop to Hope, and was occupied by Jane Davies, the grandmother of the Rev. John Davies, and great-grandmother of the celebrated Madame Edith Wynne. In 1773 the Northop Society was formed by the Rev. John Oliver, one of the Chester ministers, in the house of Anne Price. The preacher was interrupted and persecuted, but fearlessly went on proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ, and conquered the opposition. It was at Northop that Samuel Bradburn preached his first sermon. Dr. Coke visited this place more than once; on the first occasion he preached near the old smithy, and some time afterwards in the Northop Chapel. In 1773, pressed by Mr. Oliver, Mr. Richard Harrison began to preach, and for twenty-seven years before Conference appointed its first missionaries to North Wales, this good man went about from village to village, in season and out of season, preaching the universality of the atonement. He was sometimes invited by the Congregationalists, Calvinistic Methodists, and others to occupy their pulpits, and was pressed by members of the latter body to join their church. On one occasion he was present by invitation at their monthly meetings; one of the deacons called the attention of the meeting to Mr. Harrison's case, and suggested to the Wesleyan local preacher that he should identify himself with that body. Mr. Harrison innocently replied that he was a member of the Wesleyan Church, and did not see the need of changing. If, however, he could at any time be of service to them in any way he would be pleased to help on the work of the Lord. The chairman, a Mr. Jones of London, who was evidently annoyed at his reply, said rather sharply, 'Well, if he is with Wesley let him stay with him.' Mr. Richard Harrison was in labours abundant, frequently preaching at Gronant, Llanasa, Prestatyn, Rhuddlan, Dyserth, Nanerch, Llanfair, Denbigh, and adjacent localities. He was often interrupted, ridiculed, and persecuted. His life was often in danger, but his course was a steady one. He never hesitated

to do his duty, never compromised his convictions or yielded to his convenience, but kept ever pursuing the straight road. At Prestatyn he was followed by a cruel mob, determined upon preventing him going on to his appointment; but he found protection and a comfortable home in the house of Mrs. Parry, who lived in the lower end of the village. The introduction on that occasion secured for him and others a comfortable home in the same house many a time after, and once more was a seeming evil turned to good.

Mr. Richard Harrison was appointed class-leader at Northop by the Rev. John Oliver in 1772, a position for which he was well qualified.

Mr. John Bryan, when a local preacher and living in Chester, frequently preached in various places in this county before the establishment of the Welsh mission. The Society, notwithstanding that the people were Welsh, was of necessity included in the Chester Circuit, the ministers of which Circuit could minister to them only through the English language. The seed had been widely sown, but the reaping-time was to come. In September 1800 John Hughes preached at Northop; he was also met there by Mr. Gill, the second minister on the Chester Circuit, and a day or two after Mr. Owen Davies visited the place, and it was decided that Richard Harrison, and probably the members of the Northop Society, should be transferred to the Welsh work. Mr. Bryan, Hughes, Davies, and others visited the place, which was now supplied regularly with preachers in the vernacular. Amongst the first to join the Society were Robert and Jane Morris, Elizabeth Davies, Anne Morris, Priscilla Morris, Margaret Harrison, John Hodgkinson, Margaret Hughes, and John Morris, a young man eighteen years of age. In 1802 the chapel was erected, and it was a memorable day—Davies, Hughes, Jones, Bryan, and old Mr. Harrison taking part in the opening services. Especially to the good old local

preacher, who for thirty years, through storms and persecutions, had most nobly held up a Saviour who had tasted death for every man, was this a period of rejoicing. But the Society did not grow as rapidly as might have been expected at Northop. In 1844 a new, larger, and better chapel was erected; but a heavy debt was allowed to remain on it, and this, as we have shown elsewhere, caused great trouble in after years, though the difficulties were finally settled to the satisfaction of all concerned.

Halkin, which was so closely connected with Northop, was for many years the scene of Mr. Richard Harrison's labours before Conference appointed Welsh preachers to the Principality. We have referred to the class meeting held at the house of Elizabeth Davies, called Jamaica, about half-way between these two places. Amongst others who attended at this half-way cottage were Thomas and Barbara Davies of Middleist, the parents of the Rev. John Davies, who also took their children with them to the services. John Davies and Evan Parry were great friends, and together attended the services at Jamaica. Mr. Bryan also preached in the vernacular to a large company of people at Halkin while a local preacher, some time during the year 1800. Messrs. Owen Davies and John Hughes visited the place and preached there. The following year Jones (Bathafarn) and Byran on a Sunday morning, taking their stand near the top of the village, preached to a large crowd, and after that service a Society was formed at Halkin, which met for a time in the house of Thomas Cook. This house was found inconvenient, and a larger one was secured. John Jones, the occupier, was not a member of Society, and after a while grew tired of having the services in his house. He came home from the public-house drunk one night when Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) was conducting the Society meeting in the adjoining room, and he began raging round the house, and throwing the furniture about, when

his wife entreated him not to make a noise because Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) was in the other room. To this he replied, ‘I don’t care for Jones (Bathafarn) nor Jones (Halkin); my place is in here, and theirs is out.’ After this the services were held for some years in the house of Edward Jones, who had made it as chapel-like as possible. John Davies, who had been under conviction ever since he heard Mr. Bryan preach, had now joined the Society, also Evan Parry and Edward Jones, three men who for many years became workmen who needed not to be ashamed. They not only attended the means of grace, but were actively engaged in holding cottage prayer-meetings in almost every village, going as far as Llanasa and St. Asaph. They were soon put on the plan, and did good service as local preachers. Davies and Parry entered the ministry, and, as we have shown elsewhere, they became able ministers of the New Testament. In 1815 a site was secured and a chapel erected, which was opened for divine worship, April 14, 1816, Richard Harrison, Samuel Davies (1st), Edward Jones (4th) all taking part. This chapel was soon well filled, but this prosperity aroused envy and disgust, particularly in the hearts of the clergy of the parish, and they succeeded in persuading the landowners and masters to take steps to prevent people going to the Wesleyan chapel. Mr. Peter Jones of Upper Halkin and Thomas Buly, Earl Grosvenor’s mining agent, gave notice to those working in the mine that they must cease going to chapel, and go to church, or leave the work. This notice affected the Society and congregation very considerably. Many gave up attending chapel; others tried to keep up both places; others, including Edward Jones, leader, local preacher, and the leading spirit in the church, left the locality, and for a time the congregation in the chapel was very small. But the agent soon found that he had made a mistake. His policy had driven away the most sober, reliable, and steady workmen, and the offensive order had to

be withdrawn, though not before the congregation at the Wesleyan chapel had been reduced to a minimum, and the ministers and the few people still connected with it were greatly disheartened. Mr. Lot Hughes was preaching there one week-night, and in addition to the few members there were seven outsiders who heard the sermon. There was a great power in the service, and when Mr. Hughes gave an invitation to any who wished to give their hearts to Christ to remain to the after-meeting, to his joy all the seven visitors there and then gave their hearts to Christ. This was the beginning of a new period of prosperity, the work went on growing, and in a short time there were in the Society sixty members. The chapel became too small, and a scheme was formulated with a view of erecting a larger and better one. In 1828 the new chapel was dedicated to the service of God. The first leader at Halkin was Edward Jones, who did good service for several years, and afterwards removed to Carnarvonshire, where he continued faithful up to the time of his death. John Jones, Coed-y-Cra, was one of the faithful few who stood by the Society in the time of its weakness, and laboured for many years as class-leader. Enos Hunt, William Roberts, and Robert Saunders were class-leaders and true Methodists. Mr. and Mrs. Jones, the *catch* shop; John Hughes, the smith; William Davies, Rhesycae; and Richard Lloyd, will also live in the history of this Society. John Davies and Edward Parry entered the ministry, as did Edward Jones (2nd); these three were amongst the early Methodist preachers. In later years, Mr. Humphrey Hughes, who entered the English work in 1861, and died March 27, 1890, after having travelled in leading Circuits in London, Leeds, Nottingham, and was an able preacher of the gospel, and Daniel Marriott and Robert Roberts—both are well known and highly respected ministers in the Welsh work—also came from Halkin. The chapel has been greatly improved since its erection, and there is now a good church, which is still in a prosperous condition.

Mold is near the base of Moel Famau and the field of Garmon, where the Saxons and the Welsh in 427 were about to enter into a desperate conflict, when the latter, taught by the good Bishop Garmon, with one voice shouted ‘Hallelujah!’ which they repeated with such effect that the former fled, and a painful conflict was avoided. It is probable that many of the Welsh had spent the greater part of the night in prayer, which was answered in that marvellous deliverance. Mr. Wesley visited Mold, May 2, 1759. ‘The sun was very hot,’ says Mr. Wesley, ‘and the wind very cold, but as the place they had chosen for me was exposed to both sun and wind, the one balanced the other; and notwithstanding the Chester Races, which had drawn the rich away, and the market day, which detained many of the poor, we had a multitude of people, the serious part of whom soon influenced the rest; so that all but two or three remained uncovered, and kneeled down as soon as I began to pray.’ Mr. Wesley’s reception at Mold was to him very satisfactory. The following March, under date 25th, he was there again. ‘The wind was often ready to bear away both man and horse,’ says Mr. Wesley, ‘but the earnest, serious congregation rewarded us for our trouble.’ In April 1761, under date 3rd, Mr. Wesley wrote: ‘I preached about one at Mold, and was again obliged to preach abroad, though the wind was exceeding rough. All were deeply attentive.’ The great Apostle of Methodism visited Mold three times, and on each occasion the wind was high, and he was impressed by the seriousness and earnestness of the people. The Chester ministers frequently preached at Mold. Samuel Bradburn preached there. The services were conducted chiefly in the house of Mr. James Wright of Bryn-y-bal. In the year 1800, on the 3rd of September, Mr. John Hughes preached at Mold in a room in the Buarth farm-house, and Messrs. Jones and Byran visited the town the following year. In 1802 John Maurice preached in the house

of Margaret Jones, a Society was formed, and several families identified themselves with the Wesleyans. Thomas James was the first leader of the class ; his wife, John Harrison and his wife, Robert Harrison and his son, John Pritchard, William Prince, Isaac Roberts, John Longford, Mrs. Price, Mrs. Pever, Mrs. Williams, Mary Parry, Thomas Griffiths, and a little later Issachar Roberts and others identified themselves as members of that Society. In 1802 a site was bought of Mrs. Price upon which to build a chapel. There was a difficulty in procuring a site in a prominent place, hence they were thankful to get a site at all. Messrs. Thomas Price, Edward Griffiths, and Thomas James became trustees, and the four missionaries and Richard Harrison preached at the opening services. For the next four years the success was not equal to the expectation of the preachers. In 1806 Mr. Griffith Owen, a fine, handsome-looking man, on a good horse, rode into Mold, and his gentlemanly appearance attracted general attention ; and when it was discovered that he was a Wesleyan preacher, many of the inhabitants went to hear him. His preaching was accompanied with great power, and with that service the cause took a turn and steadily improved. In 1822 the chapel was enlarged, but in a few years was again filled. In 1828 a new site was secured in a pleasant situation, and on the 6th and 7th of July that year the Pendre (Townhead) Chapel was opened for divine worship. Nine of the ministers took part in the opening services. The chapel cost £1600, and was considered one of the best buildings in the town. Mr. Robert Harrison, who did so much to secure the chapel, worked hard to reduce the debt, and after a noble struggle succeeded in bringing it down to £600. In those days it was a great undertaking. The trade in the neighbourhood has often fluctuated, and these have been times of anxiety to the trustees. Mold was made the head of a Circuit in 1839, with Evan Hughes as superintendent. The town had been

the head of an English Circuit some years before, but the name of the Circuit was changed more than once; but since 1842 Mold has had two Circuits, Welsh and English. The trade of the district has been much worse in recent years, and both Societies have suffered considerably as the result. Many of the old people have passed away, still Methodism has retained a good hold in this town. The chapels have been modernised, the freehold of the Townhead Chapel purchased, and there are true Methodists doing good work in the town of Mold.

Robert Lewis, who entered the ministry in 1870, and is now a superintendent of an important Circuit in the Welsh work, and William Evans (B), who began to travel in 1873, and is now stationed in an important English Circuit, hail from Mold. Mr. E. Wheldon, a very able local preacher, was also brought up in the same church.

Mr. Wesley returning from Ireland, August 1756, spent the night at Plas-Bach, Llansantffraid, occupied by William Roberts, who, although he could not speak English, gave Mr. Wesley a hearty reception; the latter conducted family prayers that evening, and gave a word of exhortation, several of the neighbours being present the next morning. ‘Most of them understood English,’ said the preacher, ‘and God spoke to their hearts. We then rode on through one of the pleasantest countries in the world, by Holywell to Chester.’ Holywell being one of the largest towns in North Wales, it is strange that he did not preach there. Mr. John Hughes came to this town with the intention of preaching on the 3rd September 1800, but in consequence of some misunderstanding in connection with the publication of the notices, no service was held. On the 17th of the same month Mr. Hughes preached in English in the Congregational chapel. On Sunday, the 27th of September, he was again in Holywell, and preached afternoon and evening in a place

of worship in Chapel Street. After these visits no Wesleyan preacher conducted any services in this town before the 10th September 1801. On that day Mr. Bryan and Jones (Bathafarn) met at Holywell, and both preached in the open air in a place called the 'Five Courts,' a place where ball playing was indulged in. There were crowds of people present, and many were convinced of sin, decided to give their hearts to Christ, and a Society was formed at Holywell. About a fortnight later it was the town wake or races, and Mr. Bryan, accompanied by Robert Morris of Northop, a brother-in-law of Richard Harrison, decided to stand up for Christ, and preach to this people a Saviour for all men. When Mr. Bryan had reached Halkin, a company of friends from Holywell came up to warn him of his danger. They told him that the Papists were determined to avenge upon him their wrath if he came to the town, because of something he had said on the previous occasion. The 'Five Courts' adjoined the Papist chapel. His friends told him that he would surely be murdered if he attempted to preach in the town that day, and they implored him not to go. But, like Luther, his soul was filled with new courage; and notwithstanding all their entreaties, Bryan said, 'There is no devil or man in Holywell who can do me any harm without the Lord's permission; I will go if the town is full of devils.' 'And I will go with you, Mr. Bryan,' said Robert Morris, 'and die with you.' 'Robert Morris,' Mr. Bryan replied, 'not a hair of your head will be touched. The Lord reigneth; He will take care of us.' These words filled the company with confidence, and on they went to Holywell. As the little company walked along the streets with their hero riding on his horse in the midst of them, many of the inhabitants wondered at their 'reckless obstinacy and determination.' Others thought they were courageous; while others were intensely anxious. Mr. Bryan, calm, strong,

fearless, went with his horse to the stable, saw that his animal was cared for, and then proceeded to the hotel, partook of the necessary refreshment, and asked the landlord to lend him the table he had used on the previous occasion. The landlord was terribly frightened, and said, ‘I have no objection to your using the table; but, my good man, don’t think of preaching here to-day, the Papists are sure to murder you.’ ‘Will you lend me the table?’ said Mr. Bryan. The landlord intimated his willingness, but said, ‘My good man, don’t go there; a relation of the priest has his gun loaded, and he will surely kill you.’ ‘Take hold of the end of the table, my dear Robert Morris,’ was all the preacher said, and they were quickly in the ‘Five Courts.’ The table set right, Mr. Bryan fell on his knees, and in earnest prayer he committed himself, his friend, and the work of the hour absolutely into the hands of God. As he prayed the answer came (*Isa. xli. 10*), ‘Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.’ The words came so forcibly upon his mind, that when the prayer was ended he said quietly to his friend, Robert Morris, ‘No harm will befall us to-day.’ The others had failed him, and the two men were alone in the court. But the Divine Presence filled the place. The preacher and his faithful companion began to sing. The singing drew the people, and after some few had ventured, others followed, and the yard was soon crowded. The service went on satisfactorily for a while; but while the preacher was warming with his subject, and getting hold of the congregation, a stone was thrown over the wall, which alighted on the head of a woman in the crowd. ‘Are you hurt?’ asked the preacher. ‘Not in the least, sir,’ said the woman. Then there followed another stone, which fell on a young lady, who immediately cried out, ‘Neither am I hurt.’ Upon this Mr.

Bryan shouted triumphantly, ‘There will be no harm to any one ; the Almighty will protect us from the enemy.’ No further attempt was made to disturb them, and the preacher won a glorious victory. It was afterwards ascertained that the young man with the gun made an attempt to use it, but when in the act of firing the shot he was seized with such a fit of trembling, that he absolutely failed to accomplish his task. The stones that were thrown were heavy, one of them weighing two pounds ; but no harm was done, much to the wonder of all, and the incident left a deep impression upon the people for years to come. The Society which had now been formed at Holywell met in the house of Thomas Jones, Thomas Parry of Flint and Edward Jones of Halkin taking charge of the class every alternate week. Some time afterwards an old barn was rented, and made as comfortable as possible, in which the services were held. To the great advantage of the work, about this time Thomas Parry removed to Holywell to live. The Society and congregation now increased, and the old barn was found too small. A site was leased from Mr. Pennant on the Townhead, near the Chester Road, and a large chapel was erected, which was opened for divine worship in 1808 ; Owen Davies, Richard Harrison, and Stephen Games taking part in the services. With the exception of Thomas Parry and Thomas Hughes, all the trustees were from Denbigh and other places in the Circuit.

In 1812 Holywell became the head of a new Circuit, which included the greater part of the county of Flint, William Evans being its first superintendent. The removal of William Jacob to reside here was the beginning of a new era in the history of Wesleyan Methodism in this town. William Jacob was a native of Carmarthen, from whence he had removed to Manchester. He was an eminent musician, one of the most successful choirmasters, and withal an intelligent godly Methodist. When he first took charge of the

choir he laid down certain rules with regard to the management of the members of it. Every one who joined the choir was first submitted to an examination—(1) as to quality of voice, (2) as to moral character, (3) as to the willingness of the choir to agree to the candidate becoming a member, (4) as to the candidate's willingness to submit to the discipline of the choir, (5) that the candidate agreed to attend the early practice on Sunday morning at six o'clock, with a view of preparing the tunes for the services of the day. These rules were not allowed to exist merely on paper; they were most carefully attended to by the choirmaster and the members of the choir. Discipline was rigidly guarded, and ere long the choir became one of the best in North Wales. The congregation increased, and there was that life and activity in every branch of work which inevitably results in prosperity. Mr. Jacob was appointed superintendent of the Sunday school, which abundantly prospered. In 1828 the scholars numbered eleven hundred, there being four assistant superintendents, Mr. Jacob directing all. In 1830 the old chapel was inadequate to meet the requirements of the worshippers, the building was enlarged, and the accommodation doubled, and the Holywell Society became one of the greatest centres of Wesleyan Methodism in North Wales. The Easter anniversary was one of the chief gatherings of the Principality, many people travelling from every part of the county and even from the adjoining counties to be present. Popular preachers were always secured for the Holywell meeting, and the permanent results of these gatherings will never be known in this world. Notwithstanding the many changes that have taken place during the last twenty years, the Holywell great meeting is one of the attractions of the present day.

The agitation of 1849 was a great shock to Wesleyan Methodism in this town. There was a heavy debt on the chapel, the factories and mines in the neighbourhood were

not in a prosperous state at the time, and unfortunately five local preachers and some of the Holywell leaders joined the reformers, and were most persistent and audacious in their opposition to those who remained faithful to the old body. The debt on the chapel was £1400, and the losses by removals and dissensions left the church so greatly enfeebled that the burdens became more than they could carry. The old trustees were dead, and it was difficult to find any who would consent to become responsible for the money under the circumstances. The Rev. Lewis Jones, the superintendent of the Circuit, faced the difficulties with courage, confidence, and wisdom. After a hard struggle, he brought down the debt to £400, found friends willing to become trustees, a new trust was formed, and the work once more carried on with renewed vigour. It is, however, a mystery that with so many good men connected with the church, and the very pick of the Welsh ministry stationed at Holywell from 1830 to 1849, the debt was not paid off during the prosperous period. This is one of several instances where ministers of Connexional reputation have gone in and out of Circuits to some extent careless about the future of the work, and where churches have had to take up the most difficult task when they seemed least able to accomplish it. It is evident that if, under the superintendence of Mr. Lewis Jones, an attenuated church, after the shocks and divisions of the reform agitation, could pay off a thousand pounds of the debt, the stronger church in the most prosperous days could in a longer period have accomplished the task easier and more effectively.

Mr. Thomas Roberts, who joined the Society in 1807 and began to preach in 1811, was a man of sterling character. Being manager of one of the mills of Holywell, his master wanted him to attend to certain work on Sunday, but he replied that seeing it was not really essential he could not bend his conscience to do it, feeling his responsibility to

his God. He lost his situation in consequence, his health was failing, and he had a family dependent upon him. But he trusted in God, and soon his old master found out his loss, sent for and reinstated him in the factory, saying that in consideration of his failing health he could come to his business at ten instead of six o'clock in the morning. Mr. Roberts preached in the Holywell Chapel when in a very feeble state of health, only a short time before his death, and his influence in the town, his evident nearness to the end, and his pathetic appeals to his fellow-men left a deep impression on the inhabitants generally. John Hughes (A), who entered the ministry in 1831, and died in Liverpool, March 17, 1884, was a native of Holywell, and in his younger days he was a very attractive preacher, and people crowded to hear him, and up to the end he continued a loyal Methodist and devoted follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, without doubt or fear, mist or cloud ; with a face beaming with almost supernatural brightness, he passed away to be for ever with the Lord.

In recent years the population of Holywell has decreased, and the Society has struggled boldly against manifold difficulties. For many years Mr. John Owen, The Bank, was a great help in various ways in carrying on the work. William Williams, T. R. Marsden, Edwin Hughes, and Daniel Pierce have been faithfully serving Christ as local preachers ; and Mr. John Marsden, filling various offices in his own church in the Circuit and District, has laboured steadily and persistently in an unobtrusive and diligent manner. The Holywell Church, despite all the drawbacks, is still a vital force in the life of North Wales Methodism.

Flint, the county town, was probably visited by other Wesleyan preachers at an earlier date, but nothing was done to establish Wesleyan Methodism there before the year 1800, when Mr. Owen Davies visited the town, and taking his stand

on the street preached to the Flint people the first Methodist sermon of which we have any report. A Mary Jones invited him to her house, and he probably accepted her hospitality. In 1801 Mr. Bryan, after preaching, invited those who wished to join the Society to remain behind. Mr. Richard Davies of Liverpool was present, and he and Mr. Bryan were the only Wesleyan members. However, at the close of that service there were eight others who wanted to give their hearts to the Saviour, and to identify themselves with that body. Among those who that night formed the Society were Mary Jones, Anne Hughes, Ellen Hughes, Margaret Jones, and Thomas Bevan. The women in Flint, like some other places, were the most courageous in standing by Wesleyanism. Robert Morris of Northop was the first leader, and his services were of considerable help to the little flock in the days of its youth. When Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) was preaching in the house of Owen Jones, Swan Lane, in the month of August 1802, Mr. Lot Hughes, who was present and had been under conviction ever since he had heard Mr. Jones preach at Abergele, resolved to take upon him the yoke of Christ. Mr. Thomas Parry, a cooper, decided to make his home with the Wesleyans, and shortly after, at his own cost, built a small chapel for which they paid him a small rent, and he also became class-leader. Mr. Parry was very active, and went every alternate week to meet the class at Holywell, and finally removed to that town to live. In 1828 the chapel was enlarged and a gallery erected, a lease being secured. Messrs. Thomas Bevan, Edward Lloyd, Richard Gratton, Robert Redfern, Edward Bevan, John Bevan, Richard Evans, Thomas Jones, William Evans, and Evan Pugh became trustees. The Society had been steadily and healthily growing for several years prior to the alteration of the chapel. Mr. John Jones was made class-leader about 1812; he was also a local preacher and a man of considerable ability and

pre-eminent for piety. He was a great blessing to the little Society, and saw his class steadily growing in influence and number. His sudden death while walking hurriedly over the Halkin mountain on a stormy day in August 1820, deprived the church of valuable help at a time when his services appeared fruitful; and his departure to be with Christ, though great gain to him, was a heavy loss to the Flint Society. Joseph and George Parry, brothers of Thomas Parry, became local preachers; the former rendered good service in the English work in Liverpool, where he afterwards resided. Robert Pierce, who was for one year in the ministry; John Jones, who went to England; Edward Lloyd, and Edward Lewis were all local preachers, brought up in this Society. Messrs. H. Owen, Hughes, and Robert Emrys Jones, now travelling preachers in the Welsh work, claim Flint as their home. Within the last few years a large, commodious, and beautiful chapel has been erected at Flint, and the church there is in a healthy, vigorous, and prosperous state.

When Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) visited Llanferes in November 1801, Mr. Samuel Davies of Cilcain was present and deeply impressed by his preaching and singing. After hearing Mr. Jones again, as well as Mr. Bryan and John Maurice, he finally decided to cast in his lot with the Wesleyans. The young man was pressed into harness without delay, and his growth in knowledge and religious experience, and his efficiency in prayer, attracted much attention. He soon succeeded in forming a Society under the shadow of the Moel Famau mountain, and in 1803 a chapel was opened for divine worship; Messrs. W. Jones, Games, Bryan, Harrison, and Carter all taking part in the services, and the day proving one of great grace. It was at Cilcain that Joseph Matthews preached his first sermon, and here Samuel Davies first began to preach, although he was convinced of his duty to call sinners to repentance during his

stay at Llansanan, where he resided and was very useful for some time.

The same year Jones (Bathafarn) preached at Caerwys, and his preaching on that occasion prepared the way to establish a Society at Ysgeifiog, or *Ysgawog* (Elderwood). There were three persons present at the service who afterwards became instrumental in the introduction of Wesleyan Methodism into this village. Mrs. Elizabeth Evans, Ochr-y-fron, whose heart had been opened to receive Christ, went up to the preacher, and, like Lydia, said to him, ‘If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house at Ysgeifiog, and preach the gospel.’ The invitation was heartily accepted, and it was there and then published that John Maurice and John Foulkes would preach at Ochr-y-fron that day week. The latter was the boy-preacher, and only fourteen years of age at the time, and his youthful appearance naturally attracted attention. His preaching and that of his companion was accompanied with great power; sinners were crying out, ‘What must I do to be saved?’ several decided to accept Christ at that service. The Society met at Ochr-y-fron until a chapel was erected in 1804. Joseph Matthews and William Roberts were also present at the service conducted by Mr. Jones at Caerwys, and shortly after they identified themselves with the Wesleyan Society. Joseph Matthews began to preach the following year, and was in labours abundant, preaching two or three times every Sunday, and conducting cottage, prayer, or class meetings every night, walking many miles to various places, until his health failed him. He was then living in the chapel-house, and during a long affliction confined to his sick chamber, which was only divided from the chapel by the wall; at his request a hole was made by which he could hear the preacher, and many a blessing did he receive as the result of that arrangement. He died on April 7, 1818. William Roberts began to preach

in 1808, and was very useful for ten years, then died suddenly, and on the day of his interment his friend Joseph Matthews was enabled to look through the window from his bed on the funeral passing, and expressed his wonder that his fellow-worker had gone home before him. But that night his soul too crossed the bar, and he was again with his friend in a far serener clime. The year after the opening of the chapel two young men, the sons of Bron-y-cwm, Edward and William Taplen, identified themselves with the Methodist flock. Their father, interested in what he had heard about the sons, asked them what they did in their class-meeting, which was generally known as the Society. They said, 'Come and see.' The father acted on the advice of his sons, and soon joined the Wesleyan Church. The Taplen family became a great help to the Society at Ysgeiflog. John Evans, a poet of considerable merit, known as *Ioan Tachwedd*, the father of the Revs. William Hugh and John Hugh Evans, ministers of undoubted ability, was one of the disciples of Joseph Matthews, and when Mr. Matthews' health failed, he became class-leader in place of his old teacher. John Evans was a man of sound common-sense, who carefully studied his Bible, thought out its teachings for himself, and was well able to defend the doctrines he believed. He became a very useful local preacher, and as a man of judgment and of some literary ability was highly respected, and considered a tower of strength in that county. He afterwards removed to Resycae. Joshua Jones of Dawn, in the county of Denbigh, removed to Ysgeiflog, and for fifty years was a class-leader. The Rev. Lot Hughes says that he conducted many a class-meeting on his knees, and that the outburst of praise and thanksgiving would continue to flow like the waves of an incoming tide. Joshua Jones was never afraid to praise God in the great congregation when he felt prompted by the Spirit and blessed under the preaching of the word. Hugh Pierce was for years a local preacher and an active worker in

this church before he removed to Holywell. John Humphreys was another local preacher in connection with Ysgeifiog. Like other Societies in this county, Ysgeifiog was the scene of many a blessed work of grace, when sinners were brought to Christ, and when the church was filled with the new wine of the Spirit.

Not far away is the town of Caerwys. *Caer* means fortress, *wys* or *gwys*, summons ; and some think that this was the place to which the Romans summoned before their judicial courts transgressors of the law. Others contend that it was the town to which the bards were summoned, the last of such gatherings being in the ninth year of the reign of Elizabeth. The English name is Courtton. Richard Harrison preached in this town long before the Wesleyan missionaries visited the place. Mr. Bryan, on his way to Northop from Tremeirchion, in September 1801, preached with great effect to a large company of people in the old market-house. In 1802 Jones (Bathafarn) preached at Caerwys, when several of those who were instrumental in beginning the Society at Ysgeifiog were converted. In 1805 Mr. Bryan preached at Caerwys, and at the close of the service prayed very earnestly for an open door, and when he had concluded, Robert Anwyl, of the Old Swan, went up to the preacher and gave him a hearty invitation to his house. The offer was at once accepted, and the Old Swan became the home of the little Methodist Society at Caerwys, and some time after, when Robert Anwyl went to live at another house, the ark was taken thither. After fifteen years of trial in the cottage, without any great success, the old factory was taken and made as comfortable and chapel-like as possible. Those days were testing times for the few Wesleyan pioneers. They were a feeble folk, despised, persecuted, and not unfrequently, when engaged in the worship of God, stones were thrown in through the windows and at the door, and they were exposed to much risk. A part of the roof fell in on one occasion. The Rev. John Jones administering the Sacrament, looking up and

seeing the stars through the holes in the roof, remarked that the place was not too poor and miserable for the Lord of Hosts to dwell therein. The presence of the Master was so overwhelming that they from full hearts sang the praises of God until late in the night. The friends had great difficulty in finding a site for several years, but in 1842 Lord Mostyn promised one. The tenant, however, would not give up possession, and after endeavouring to persuade him in every reasonable way, they were compelled to take possession of the land by force. The men worked in the quarry, and others in their own ways did all they could in order to erect a place in which to worship God. They could not give money, but they could work with their hands, and they did. When the Rev. Hugh Hughes was preaching at Caerwys on one occasion, he was explaining and enforcing the reality of the union between Christ and the Christian, and emphasising that it was one of faith, represented only by the Sacrament as an outward form, etc. etc., when one of the largest farmers in the neighbourhood, who was present, stood up and said that he had always understood that if the Sacrament was taken and the church attended, there was no need of repentance, regeneration, etc. The preacher availed himself of the opportunity, and showed the need of a new heart, etc., and the farmer was there and then convinced of sin, sought and found Christ, and up to the day of his death proved a faithful Methodist.

During the great revival of 1859 the Society at Caerwys was strengthened in number and spiritual power. The following year the chapel was enlarged, and the cause has ever since worn a more substantial aspect. Robert Anwyl became a local preacher, John Edwards and Joseph Tamblyn, too, did much earnest and loyal service in the same way; while Peter Jones (B) entered the ministry, and is one of the brethren beloved by all who know him. Dr. Davies, the son of the Rev. Samuel Davies (1st), was for years one of the most intelligent of local preachers, whose services were of

great value to the Circuit. George Hughes, John Edwards, Edward Jones, and Robert Williams were trustees of the chapel, as were also some of those we have previously mentioned. David Hughes, John Lloyd, Thomas Ball, and P. Jones were class-leaders. William Williams did great service in conjunction with Edward Jones and John Edwards in procuring a site and erecting the first chapel, Robert Williams finding the stones at his own cost, and others giving the labour or money for building the same. The zeal, the earnest, intelligent, and whole-hearted labour of some of these good people is very commendable. Their faithfulness night after night, week after week, in giving their spare time, some to excavate for the foundation, others in the quarry preparing the stones, and others the timber, and with one aim only in view, the securing of a new chapel, is most praiseworthy. They glorified God and demonstrated the reality of their religion a great deal more than if they had given large sums of their surplus moneys towards building that house of prayer, and they found their reward in the work. In the history of religion in the Principality we have many such instances. Rough diamonds some of these men may have been, but when suns have faded and systems seen their day and gone, their work will shine in the fairer light of the Lamb with greater lustre and glory as the eternal ages roll on.

Bagillt, which is probably a perversion of Bugeillt, a compound of *bu*, a cow and ox, and *geillt*, the plural form of *gallt*, a cliff, an ascent (the English equivalent would be Oxcliff), has grown into a populous district and a strong Methodist centre. The first Society in the immediate neighbourhood was formed at Flint. Mary Jones, living at Bedol Farm, Bagillt, became a member of the Wesleyan Society at Flint, and knowing the need of the neighbourhood, invited the Wesleyans to preach there, which they responded to in 1802. The preachers were Joseph Parry, a brother of Thomas Parry of Flint, who was then living in Liverpool, and Richard

Davies of the same town. Both had come over specially to conduct that service, and Mr. Parry had brought with him his sister from Flint to assist with the singing. That service was held in the house of Mary Davies, Lower Village (Pentre-isa). There was only a small company present, but Mr. Lot Hughes was one of the few hearers. A Society was formed, and an old slaughter-house was converted into as comfortable a place of worship as possible. In this place, which was known as the 'Little Chapel,' the little flock continued to worship for some years. Samuel Phillips was the first leader, a man of undoubted godliness, of burning zeal, and most exemplary in his fidelity. He was orderly and strictly punctual. Many a time did he begin the Sunday school and other means of grace to the minute when alone in the sanctuary, and there is no doubt that the present prosperity of Bagillt Methodism owes much to this good man. The Little Chapel became too small and inconvenient, and in 1815, on the last day in that year, a new chapel was set apart for divine worship ; Samuel Davies (1st), D. Jones (2nd), Richard Harrison, Edward Pritchard (Llanasa), and Thomas Morgan all taking part in the services of that day. The Society had experienced its dark and bright days, but on the whole it seemed to be growing. In 1829 they were blessed with a revival of the work of God, week after week they had converts, and they began to feel their need of a larger place of worship. A large scheme was taken in hand with which Mr. George Henry, John and Richard Gratton were prominently connected, and in April 1842 the Large Chapel was dedicated as a place of worship. The opening services were largely attended, Thomas Aubrey, William Powell, William Owen, Samuel Davies (1st), Edward Anwyl, R. M. Preece, and John Jones (2nd), who was then superintendent of the Circuit, all taking part in the services. The work prospered abundantly ; the Society, which had only numbered forty, reached more than two hundred, and, better than all, was full

of life, and its members were constantly at work. They had a large and efficient Sunday school, believed in cottage prayer-meetings and in persistent work for Christ. In 1864 the chapel was enlarged in its seating accommodation, beautified, and made more attractive. In addition to those mentioned, John Thomas and Edward Davies—grandson of Mary Davies, in whose house the first service was held—were most devoted class-leaders and local preachers, men of the old stamp, with the old Methodist ring about their work and experience. They rendered most valuable help in the development of Wesleyan Methodism in Bagillt. In their zeal, the Methodists, as the result of the cottage prayer-meetings and the extension of the town, built a small chapel which they called Zoar, on one side of the town. The same reason existed for taking hold of the people on the other side, and the little chapel called Ebenezer was erected—the first-named in 1860, the second in 1880. With the three chapels, the large one and the two smaller ones, Sunday schools, Society classes, large congregations—all the results of the small beginning within the present century—well may we ask, ‘What hath God wrought?’ Samuel Phillips, who was often alone in the old slaughter-house, found a co-leader in Hugh Hughes, Nant, and another in William Griffith, the ropemaker. These men were not scholars, but they were powerful in prayer, strong, robust Christians, and greatly beloved by their fellow-men. William Hughes and his brother Humphrey and John Owen formed another trio of class-leaders. Richard Gratton, who was one of the most intelligent men in the district, and was for many years elected to fill the post of treasurer of one or the other of the Connexional funds in the North Wales District, had one of the largest libraries, was a class-leader, steward, and gave his time and talent, influence and money to build up Wesleyan Methodism in this Circuit. There was also John Howells, a leader who was straight and fearless in his talk, and though

sometimes considered singular, was withal a truly good man. William Evans, the smith, was well up in Scripture; Robert Roberts was a successful leader and Sunday-school superintendent; and Robert Jones was an excellent man and hard worker, as was also Robert Williams, all class-leaders. Probably there were many others who were zealous in their day, and have fought their way through to the better world, whose names, if not known to us, are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. There were, moreover, good women from the days of Mary Jones down, connected with the Wesleyan Society at Bagillt; Anne Phillips, Mary Griffiths, Catherine Roberts, and others, faithful disciples of the Master. Many of the old families are still represented by the descendants. In Isaac Hughes, Joseph Hughes, David and Francis Jones, Richard Llewelyn, Edward Jones, Thomas Gratton Thomas, H. T. Barker, and John Williams, all connected with Methodism, are represented the old families who built up the Wesleyan churches in the neighbourhood. They inherit the promise which in their case is fulfilled to the third and fourth generation. In 1860 Bagillt became the head of a new Circuit, and it is now one of the most prosperous in the North Wales District.

Llanasa, which for many years has been a strong Methodist centre, was first visited by Mr. Richard Harrison. In the spring of 1782 he took his stand near the house of Thomas Jones, Axton, father of Joseph Jones, who in after years became so useful as preacher and class-leader. The preacher was ridiculed, despised, and mocked, but Mr. Harrison continued to exhort his fellow-men to 'Behold the Lamb of God.' While endeavouring to explain the lamb-like character of Christ, one of the thoughtless young men threw into the midst of the company, and under the eye of the preacher, a dead lamb. The preacher being equal to the occasion, pointed out to his hearers that the dead lamb was useless; but that the Lamb of God, which was slain, was alive again, and ever lived

to make intercession for men. The truth took hold of the people, and the effect of that service was of a permanent character. For twenty years Mr. Harrison visited this neighbourhood, preaching Christ to the people as often as he could. In 1802 Mr. John Hughes visited the locality, as did Mr. Bryan and Jones (Bathafarn). The first Society was formed in the house of John Blythyn, on the hillside of the Axton Mountain, by Mr. Jones (Bathafarn). Some time after, Mr. Lloyd of Sarn had on his farm a vacant house, which was secured and used as a place of worship. The first members of Society were T. Lloyd and his family, John Williams, John Hughes, Thomas Hughes, Hugh Hughes, Edward Holland, Mary Parry, Margaret Profit (1st and 2nd). In 1804 Edward Jones, who had been in several of the large towns in England, and had come under the preaching of Wesleyans, returned to his native place, feeble in health and depressed in spirits, when a few of the Wesleyans visited him, prayed with him, and he was led to trust in God, found peace, joined the Society, and soon began to preach. In 1808 he went out as a travelling preacher ; in 1819 he went over to the English work ; his health soon failed, and in 1820, on 27th October, Edward Jones (4th) passed within the veil to be for ever with the Lord.

It was found necessary to remove the place of holding the services to Glasdir, the house of Thomas Powell ; and again, before long, to Gronant. The services were often held in the house of Margaret Profit, the mother of Mr. Joseph Profit. This good woman ‘endured hardship’ as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Her business was taken away from her, she had to leave her house in Tanlan, and to look for her recompense hereafter—all because she would not cease to be a Wesleyan. After a long and persistent effort a site was secured from Mr. Thomas Brown of Abergele for £46, which was known as Ash-Cross (Croes-Onen) ; the chapel was erected, and on the 11th August 1816 was opened for divine worship, Mr. Jones (Bathafarn), Edward Jones (4th), David

Williams, Thomas Lloyd, and Mr. Manoon taking part in the services. May-day was a 'dancing day' with the miners of Flintshire; they turned out in large numbers to town and village, each dressed up for the occasion, marching in companies led by one which they called a 'cadi,' clad in not a very attractive lady's costume, and a fool, who carried a ladle to receive all the money given them. There was a man in the neighbourhood who generally consented to have the blackened face, and either to carry the ladle or to act as cadi; his name was John Lloyd. On a certain May-day one of the Wesleyans went up to John Lloyd, and in a solemn and emphatic manner said, 'Dear Jack, there will be no summer dancing in hell; the cry there is, The harvest is passed, the summer ended, and we are not saved.' Lloyd endeavoured to throw it off; but his conscience had been awakened, and he had no rest for his soul till he trusted in Christ. He soon became an active worker, class-leader, and as diligent in the service of Christ as he had been hitherto in the service of Satan. Edward Pritchard became a Methodist, and his intelligence, godliness, and burning zeal brought him to the front place in the Society, and for twenty-five years as class-leader, local preacher, and Christian worker, he did great service for Christ. The chapel became too small, and, notwithstanding the debt on it, enlargement was decided upon, and accomplished in 1827. After this the Cross Chapel, as it was called, became the centre of great activity. From all the villages round families came in large numbers; the Sunday school increased to four hundred scholars, and Llanasa was soon one of the prosperous Methodist centres. The Methodist chapel appeared an eyesore to a gentleman whose mansion overlooked it, and he expressed a desire that a high wall should be erected to prevent him seeing the chapel. The trustees were involved in a great deal of unnecessary trouble and expense because they would not do this nor remove the chapel. His land adjoined the chapel, and he insisted on an

annual payment from the trustees, because some drops of water might fall from the chapel on his land. He then threatened to erect a high wall to prevent light into the chapel, etc. In the meantime the Douglas Bank failed, the Holywell factory stopped, and the blatant squire was obliged to leave the mansion and seek some less expensive home, and the chapel people were allowed to worship without constant annoyance. The Wesleyans in Wales owe no debt of gratitude to the landowners. In many instances, in the most persistent and cold-hearted manner, they did their best to prevent the Society having any footing at all in village or town. In 1839 Llanasa was made the head of a Circuit, with William Rowlands as superintendent minister. In 1843, during the ministry of the Rev. Rowland Hughes, a new chapel was erected, much larger, leaving a debt of £1000 after the friends had done their best. The preachers at the opening services were Rowland Hughes, William Powell, David Evans (1st), John Richards, R. Jones, and William Jones; and were red letter days in the history of Methodism in that Circuit. Llanasa became a great centre of attraction, with Rowland Hughes as preacher, a large chapel, and a number of strong, intelligent Christian workers. The congregation was one of the largest, and the church was one of the most vigorous.

Llanasa Church roll is a long and interesting one. John Williams, Sarn-Wilkin, was active and useful as a local preacher and worker, and in 1809 he was called out as travelling preacher. He retired from the work in 1813, and afterwards settled at Machynlleth. John Hughes, Sarn, was a good worker when the cause was feeble. Thomas Powell and Isaac Hughes, the son of John Hughes, Glasdir, who opened his house for Methodist preaching, did good service as local preachers. Edward Jones, Richard Lewis, Peter Profit, Edward Pierce, and Robert his brother, William Hughes, and Joseph Profit were preachers raised up in this church; and more recently John Roberts (c), now superintendent of an

important Circuit in the Welsh work, and who is a native of Llanasa. This Society has had a number of able and influential class-leaders. In addition to those mentioned we may add the names of Thomas Evans, Thomas Davies, William Roberts, John Blythyn, Henry Jones, George Profit, and Thomas Hughes. These men did service to Christ and the Methodist Church, the results of which will be visible for generations to come. Others there were whose names are not known to the outside world, but in their own sphere they were pillars of strength, workers who needed not to be ashamed, and who will have the Master's 'Well done' as their eternal reward.

Dyserth, which probably means 'house on a steep' (English name Steepton), was one of the places in which Richard Harrison took an interest prior to the formation of the Welsh mission. In 1798 he preached in an old barn at Llewerllyd. When David Jones, son of Thomas Jones of Llewerllyd, returned from Liverpool, where he had been for a time, and become attached to Wesleyan Methodism, he invited Mr. William Williams, Plasbela, to the village to preach to the people; and at that time Mrs. Roberts, King's Head, Rhuddlan, decided to give her heart to the Saviour. The place was regularly visited after this service in 1803, the meetings being held in a small cottage at the lower end of the village. In 1805 Messrs. Bryan and David Rogers preached at Dyserth, and Elizabeth Williams, Ochr-y-foel, was led to identify herself with the 'new sect.' This good woman was for nine months the only Wesleyan in the village, and she suffered much persecution from her neighbours. Her husband said to her one day, after a long silence, 'Beti, I have made up my mind, and you must either leave these religionists or me.' 'Well, David dear,' said Beti, 'to leave you will be a great trial for me; but I prefer leaving you to leaving the Lord Jesus Christ; you can only go with me unto death.' The answer, which was given with such calmness and in such a sweet resolute spirit,

left a deep impression on the mind of David Williams, and instead of pressing his resolve upon his wife, he went with her to the meetings of the Wesleyans, and soon became one of the most zealous of members. After nine months under the preaching of John Jones (Corwen), Jane Wynne, Gwaenysgor, identified herself with the despised sect ; and a young woman, by the name of Anne Parry, became the third of the little company. The three women held on in the unity of faith and prayer for some time. Richard and Susannah Roberts joined them, and proved an acquisition ; and shortly afterwards Edward Jones (Hen-blas), John Jones, Elizabeth Williams (Ty'ntwll), John Roberts (Bryniau), and others were added to their number. In 1811 Mr. William Parry, who had been a Wesleyan at Liverpool, came to Dyserth with his zeal for Christ and Methodism boiling over, and his work of faith ; and their united labours were soon followed with most encouraging results. Mr. Parry himself left for Denbigh, where his work was greatly blessed, as we have shown elsewhere ; but his brother, David Parry, afterwards known as Parry (Faenol-fawr), was, under the preaching of William Jones (Llanelidan), brought to decision for Christ, and he became a tower of strength to the zealous few at Dyserth, and was made leader and local preacher. The following year Thomas Williams, Tan-yr-allt, his cousin, became a Methodist ; and when Mr. Parry left for St. Asaph, Williams became class-leader. John Jones, who became a leader some time afterwards, joined the Society about the same period. The services were now held in a schoolroom. In 1822 a site was secured, and a chapel erected, John Parry, Thomas Morris, Henry Hughes, Thomas Jones, John Jones, Richard Ellis, and John Ellis becoming trustees. A notable fact in connection with this Society was the attention given and the kindness shown by the Rev. George Strong, the Vicar of Dyserth. He examined and gave prizes to the Sunday scholars, a large Bible for the pulpit, and in various ways most kindly and generously assisted the

Wesleyan Society in the village. In 1840 the chapel was enlarged and galleries erected, which effort was followed with the divine blessing; the Sunday school was large and most efficiently worked. The singing became a great attraction, and the cause developed into a very substantial one. W. Mitchell, W. Thomas, R. Williams, O. Lewis, D. Williams, and D. Thomas became trustees, in addition to some of the older ones. J. P. Maurice, who in 1811 retired from the ministry, after remaining some years in Cardiganshire, settled at Dyserth, where he did good service as local preacher during the last fourteen years of his life. The Rev. Charles Nuttall, who entered the ministry in 1850 and died at Towyn, May 2, 1887, was a minister who possessed a well-balanced mind, and a diligent student who carefully composed and fluently delivered his sermons, was brought up in the Dyserth Society; Thomas Williams, John Jones, T. Roberts, J. Williams, and W. Griffith were local preachers; and for many years John Thomas, Dyserth, was considered one of the most original preachers of that honoured brotherhood; while his brother Edward for a long period has been well known, and his services in the pulpits outside of his own Circuit have been much appreciated. John S. Williams, who is on the mission field, and John E. Jones, who is travelling in an English Circuit, hail from Dyserth.

At Galltmelyd (which is a branch of Dyserth) there is at present a good chapel and congregation, and a Society which is worked vigorously. James Williams, who is the oldest local preacher in the Circuit, has been usefully connected with this young Society. Wesleyan Methodism has a strong hold of this part of the county. The one drawback has been the fluctuation of the mining work in the district. A large number of intelligent and substantial working men at one period found employment in the mines here, but in recent years many have been compelled to leave the locality and seek work in some of the other centres of activity.

The Cwm was visited by John Foulkes, Pant-Ifan, the boy-preacher, who in 1802, standing on a chair, preached the first sermon in the house of Thomas Williams, Tynewydd. After several visits he formed the Society in the locality. Amongst the first to identify themselves with the work were Thomas Parry, Tanybryn, and his family. Mr. Parry had been a bigoted Churchman, and strongly objected to the Nonconformists, but he was won by the earnest pleadings of the young preacher to join the people he had ridiculed and despised. Lord Mostyn, who thought a great deal of the Tanybryn family, having heard that they had become Methodists, went to see them, and told Mrs. Parry what he had heard about them. ‘Is it true,’ asked the noble lord, ‘that you have joined these wicked heretics?’ ‘Yes,’ said the good woman, ‘perfectly true, and we are determined to continue with them too; we never heard such truths before they came to the neighbourhood.’ ‘Do you not go to church now, then,’ said Lord Mostyn. ‘No,’ replied Mrs. Parry; ‘I have not been, but Thomas Parry has gone a few times.’ Mrs. Parry without any delay went on to describe to his lordship the doctrines preached by those wicked heretics, and so impressed him that he said, ‘Well, well, every one ought to have fair play for his soul.’ Mr. and Mrs. Parry continued active and generous supporters of the Society as long as they lived. Their daughter was the devoted wife of Parry (Faenol-fawr), where Mr. Parry of Tanybryn died, January 28, 1835. In the early days services were frequently held at the house of Ellis, the tailor, a well-known personage in the village, and also at Hendy; a cottage known as Plas-onn was afterwards rented, which was made as comfortable as possible, where the services were held till 1832. That year Mr. William Williams removed from Holywell to Cwm, and being a zealous and enthusiastic Wesleyan, new life was given to the little flock in this village, and a site was secured and a good chapel erected. John Thomas began to preach here, where he lived

for many years before he removed to Dyserth. Edward, his brother, was class-leader and local preacher; while Aaron Williams, son of William Williams, and Moses Roberts began to preach at Cwm; the latter has been in the ministry for years.

The Methodists also early obtained a footing in Rhuddlan—perhaps we should style it Rhydlan, the Ford-by-the-Church, for the town probably owes its name to the fact that there are in the locality three fords. One is described as the ford by the sea, the other by the two waters, and the third by the church. King Edward the First held his Parliament in this town in 1283, and here his son was proclaimed the first Prince of Wales. It was on the great plain near here known as ‘Morfa Rhuddlan,’ that the English army under Offa defeated Caradog in 795, after a fierce conflict. It is often said that the minor strain, which is one of the prominent characteristics in Welsh music, was first introduced in this place after that battle. Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) visited Rhuddlan in 1800 in the early part of that year. Finding a few Calvinistic Methodists assembled in a cottage, he joined with them on that occasion, but what reception he had we know not; but this we know, that that night William Jones, a weaver from Prestatyn, who was present, invited the young Wesleyan preacher to his house to preach, which invitation was gladly accepted. In 1802 Mr. Bryan preached in the town, taking his stand in the yard of the Gwindy. Shortly afterwards Edward Jones (Corwen) came to Rhuddlan, and when about to begin the service on the street, a constable, sent by the Rev. Mr. Morris, the vicar, came up to Mr. Jones, and was about to take hold of him, when the preacher said to him with a good deal of authority, ‘See that you do it not.’ The constable held back his hand, and allowed the service to proceed. Mr. Jones proceeded to the King’s Head, which was kept by Elizabeth Roberts. The officer came again, and demanded the preacher to appear before the vicar. ‘Tell

your master,' said he, 'that I shall be here for a short time, and if he has any business with me to come here to see me.' Nothing more was said to the Wesleyan preacher. For some time services were held in a room in the old banqueting house ; a busy agent, however, put an end to their using that place. The old barn of the Blackamoore Inn was then taken. This being the property of Dean Shipley, he threatened the tenant to turn him out if he allowed these people the use of the barn. Richard Hughes, Rhyl, was preaching in the street in front of the King's Head when the Dean passed by ; the next day the landlady was summoned before church dignitaries for allowing the meeting to be held before her house. The landlady defended herself, and explained that the people were the followers of Wesley, whom the Dean had known, and whom he professed to respect. After this opposition was not so severe as it had been hitherto. For years Mr. Evan Jones, the draper, and Elizabeth Roberts had gone to Rhyl, and had been most useful workers and supporters in the building up of Methodism in that place. Another attempt to get a place at Rhuddlan was made, and finally they succeeded, and a small chapel was erected in 1832. The cause revived for a time, but remained very feeble for some years. In 1848, when a great meeting was held at Rhuddlan, the Revs. William Owen and Evan Davies preaching, there was an unusual power in the services, and at the close of the evening meeting there were fourteen inquirers. This meeting gave the few disheartened Wesleyans a new start. The work prospered, and other converts followed. Shortly after this Mr. Thomas Hughes was made a class-leader, and on the death of Evan Jones, which was a great loss not only to the Society at Rhuddlan but throughout the Circuit, Robert Wynne was made leader. In 1859 this Society was greatly strengthened during the revival which was so widely felt in Wales during that year. Edward Ellis, who has been for some years a most active class-leader and worker at Abergel,

was first appointed to take charge of a class at Rhuddlan. Mr. William Williams, who afterwards removed to Rhyl, took great interest in the work, and the cause reached a higher point than it had at any previous period in its history. Mr. Joseph Profit resided at Rhuddlan for several years, and was useful as leader and preacher; and more recently Mr. Griffith, a good man and true, has rendered valuable services in the pulpit and with his pen, and especially in his devotion to Christ and the Church.

The names of Evan Jones and other members of his family are still fragrant; his sayings are often repeated, his zeal frequently referred to, and his life-work is a tower of strength to the Wesleyan Society in the old town. Elizabeth Roberts, John Owen, the saddler, Jane Edwards, Sarah Roberts, Samuel Lloyd, Edward Jones, and others are remembered by the work they have done. Thomas Hughes (B), whose father was a class-leader, is a grandson of Evan Jones, and is one of the ablest of the younger ministers in the Welsh work; he hails from this place, where several members of his family have worked hard and well with the Church of their choice. 'A good name is better than precious ointment,' says Solomon. The Rhuddlan Church can claim the inheritance of the good, and will be held responsible for the best and wisest use of this rich legacy, which is theirs for ever.

Prestatyn, which is partially a corruption of Prysgoed-ddin, *prys* meaning covert; *coed*, wood; *din*, fortress or hill (the English name of which is given as Covertham), is a village which at one time was one of the most godless and wicked in the county. The wakes at Prestatyn furnished most deplorable scenes. The Calvinistic Methodists were cruelly treated by the rough and reckless mobs of the place, but the fact that sixteen of the leaders of this persecution died in one year left a deep impression on the minds of many of the inhabitants.

The first introduction of Wesleyan Methodism was brought

about in a very marvellous way. There had been a ship wrecked on the coast, on board of which there was a young man by the name of Gilpin, who escaped, and found shelter in the house of a Mrs. Parry (*Penisàrdre*). She treated the young man with motherly attention and care. The young man's father was a good Wesleyan local preacher, living in England, who was so impressed with the kindness of the good Welsh woman that he became greatly attached to her, and the latter became so impressed with the purity of character, the sincerity and godliness of the Wesleyan preacher, that she became deeply attached to the Wesleyans for his sake. Richard Harrison was once on his way to Rhuddlan to lift up his voice against the sins of the people, and when he had come somewhere near Dyserth, a mob from that place followed him, throwing stones at him, and determined to beat him badly, if not to kill him. He was compelled to flee for his life, and was glad to find shelter in the house of Mrs. Parry, Prestatyn. In 1801 Mr. John Hughes preached in an old barn at Prestatyn ; Mrs. Parry was present, and delighted to welcome the Wesleyan preacher ; shortly after that, accompanied by the wife of Thomas Bell, she went to Pant-Ifan to hear Mr. Jones (*Bathafarn*) preach, whom she pressed to visit Prestatyn. Some time after, Messrs. Jones and Bryan preached in the barn of John Foulkes to a large congregation ; and Mrs. Parry, who had fully made up her mind to identify herself with this people, Thomas Bell and his wife, Daniel Jones, and a few others, constituted the first Society. Preaching was not frequent at Prestatyn for some years ; they depended chiefly on Joseph Matthews, Hugh Pierce (*Ysgeifiog*), Edward Jones, John Davies, Evan Parry, and the boy-preacher from Pant-Ifan. Mrs. Parry died in great peace in 1805, and the little Society which she had fostered suffered greatly through her departure. Some years after this, preaching services, which had been rare, were more frequent, first at the house of Thomas Bell, then at the workshop of John Hughes, the

shoemaker, and finally at the parlour of the upper public-house. In 1824 a site was secured, and John Hughes and Robert Pritchard, after having permission, set about finding stones for building the chapel, though without any immediate prospect of being able to do so. Henry Hughes, who was the class-leader at the time, heard, however, of a man who would lend money on interest,—which at that time was one of the difficulties in connection with chapel building,—and so a start was speedily made. The chapel was completed about the end of the same year, or more probably the beginning of 1825, and opened for public worship. It was not a pretentious building, but it seemed indeed a haven of rest to the few faithful, hard-worked men, who had blistered their hands toiling in the quarry at work they had never done before, night after night and day after day when it was possible to steal away from their ordinary occupation. Labour, however, was rest to them, and pain was sweet, for God was with them. Now that they had completed their little sanctuary, it seemed the best place outside heaven. The opening of the chapel was followed by steady prosperity, and after fourteen years it was found too small to contain the people who desired to worship there. The anniversary services were held on Ascension Thursday, year after year; and many of these meetings were big with mercy, and the people were abundantly blessed. In 1840 the Revs. Thomas Aubrey and Evan Richards were conducting the services; the first night Mr. Richards preached on board a new ship with great power; the next day was one long to be remembered,—a great many young men gave their hearts to Christ, and a work of grace began which went on spreading for some time. The following year a new chapel was erected, dedicated to the worship of God the first week in February 1842; Thomas Aubrey, Rowland Hughes, John Bartley, and William Owen all taking part in the services. The old chapel of that date, which was described by Griffith Hughes as being unlike anything in heaven or on earth or in

the water under the earth, has again given place to a commodious chapel, which is well attended, and has a good Society. The three men, John Hughes, Roger Pritchard, and Henry Hughes, will long be remembered, and in the great day will find that their works of faith and labour of love were not in vain in the Lord. Thomas Amos, John Jones, who was active at Gronant, and in later years Thomas Jones, William Baldwin, Edward Cunnah, and Roger Pritchard, son of R. Pritchard, were most useful class-leaders. There is now a substantial Society, a good chapel and Sunday school, with the second minister of the Rhyl Circuit stationed at Prestatyn.

Through the efforts of the Rev. Frederick Payne an English chapel has been erected at Prestatyn, which is very convenient for visitors during the summer months, and as time goes on should become more highly valued by the residents in the neighbourhood.

Rhyl, which is widely known as one of the most attractive of summer resorts, did not exist in the days of early Methodism. John Maurice, visiting a relative of his who lived in the neighbourhood, was asked to preach, an invitation which he gladly accepted, service being held in the house of Thomas Hughes, known as Pen-y-ddauglawdd. This was some time in 1802. Jones (Bathafarn) and John Hughes also preached in the same place. Not long afterwards the Society was formed by Mr. Hughes, and the members were Thomas Hughes, Towyn; T. Roberts, Pwll Corsog; M. Hughes, Tynewydd; Mary Thomas, Elizabeth Hughes, Mary Parry, Rhyl; Jane Edwards, Merllyn; and Elizabeth Roberts, Rhuddlan. Thomas Hughes was appointed the first class-leader. In 1814 Evan Jones, Rhuddlan, to whom we have referred elsewhere, joined the little band of Methodists at Rhyl. In 1815 it was thought desirable to secure a more convenient place to worship in than the house in which all the services had previously been held. The Society was only a ‘smoking

flax,' and it grew weaker, there being at one time only three sisters and Evan Jones to keep it alive. In 1820 Mr. Richard Hughes of Abergel married Miss Edwards, Merllyn, and came there to reside. His removal was made a blessing to the few Methodists at Rhyl. He not only became an active leader, but a very acceptable and hard-working local preacher. The old room, which had been long known as the 'Narrow Chapel,' was deemed unsatisfactory, and the few Wesleyans anticipated a better building. Rhyl was also beginning to develop as a holiday resort. In 1831 a site was secured in what was considered a convenient situation in those days, and the chapel was opened for divine worship, August 28 of that year, John Owen (Gyffin), John Hughes, William Jones (Liverpool), and Robert Jeffreys conducting the services. The trustees were Thomas Roberts, Pwll-Corsog; Hugh Hughes, Ty-Newydd; James Hughes, Morfa-gwybr; William Hughes, Terfyn; Richard Hughes, Merllyn; and Thomas Parry, Penbryn, Dyserth. With the new chapel Methodism assumed a greatly improved position in the town, and the Society and congregation went on increasing. In 1853 the chapel had become too small, Rhyl had become an attractive watering-place, and the need of a larger and better chapel was generally acknowledged. Mr. Thomas Roberts sold the Wesleyans a site in Sussex Street, a central part of the town, and a good substantial chapel was erected that year. Messrs. Bartley, Lewis Jones, and Hugh Owen were the preachers at the opening services. It was felt, notwithstanding that the new chapel was one of the best in the District, and the erection was followed with great prosperity, that the defective light was a painful drawback. The only windows were in the ends of the structure. The walls were substantial, the seats comfortable, the chapel was large and satisfactory; but most people said of it, 'One thing thou lackest.' For twenty years worship was continued in Sussex Street Chapel, but in 1872 it was decided to erect a new

edifice, and a site in Brighton Road being secured, the present chapel was erected and dedicated for divine worship on June 14 and 15, 1874. The premises are considered most satisfactory, and the generosity of the members of the congregation relieved the trustees of all financial anxiety after the day of opening. The wisdom and influence of the Revs. Richard Pritchard and John Hugh Evans, the respective superintendents, had much to do in bringing about this satisfactory issue. The late Mr. B. Littler did good service, and contributed handsomely, and was supported by William Williams, Summerfield; J. Griffiths, and Mrs. Jones, Olinda Villa; J. Taylor, Mr. and Mrs. Amos, Messrs. Buckingham, James Davies, Griffiths (Free Trade Hall), P. Jones, Mrs. Parry, Miss Roberts, Hugh Evans, and several others equally worthy and generous if not so well known. The Rhyl Society, which had been included at one time in the Holywell Circuit, then in the Llanasa, and afterwards in the Denbigh Circuit, became the head of a new Circuit in 1866, the Rev. William Hugh Evans being the first superintendent. The successful effort in connection with the new chapel gave an impetus to other places in North Wales, the revival spread from end to end of the District, with the result that new chapels have been erected in nearly every town, village, and hamlet, and in every case the chapel conditions complied with. The Rhyl Circuit, guided by such men as Messrs. Littler and Williams, was brought to the front rank; able ministers have been secured, and the Circuit made one of the most desirable in the Welsh work.

There is a small chapel in another part of the town in which services are conducted regularly, and which has proved a blessing to the inhabitants in that neighbourhood.

The English Society has grown within a few years. In 1862 the Rev. Edward Crump was appointed to the Llandudno and Rhyl Circuit, and two years later the Rev. Frederick Payne was sent to this new station. From that

time to the present Mr. Payne has continued on the borders, and with singular devotion has given his services, talents, and money in order to establish English Methodism along the North Wales coast. Rhyl is perhaps one of the most successful of the English Wesleyan Societies. There is a good chapel, Society, and congregation, not only during summer months, but throughout the year, which shows that the inhabitants of Rhyl are influenced to identify themselves with the English Wesleyans.

Wesleyan Methodism in this county is largely the out-growth of the devoted efforts of a group of local preachers. Richard Harrison had the joy of working together with such men as John Foulkes, Tremeirchion, the boy-preacher; Joseph Matthews and William Roberts, Ysgeiflog; Edward Jones, Halkin; Edward Pritchard, Llanasa; Evan Jones, Rhuddlan; Thomas Roberts, Holywell; William and David Parry, Dyserth, and afterwards Faenol-fawr and Denbigh; and prior to their entering the ministry, John Davies, Evan Parry, and Edward Jones. These men were devoted to one object—the extension of the kingdom of Christ. In season and out of season, night after night, they were engaged in preaching or holding cottage, prayer, or class meetings. They were in labours abundant, frequently reaching their homes in the small hours of the morning, never thinking about rest or reward. In addition to the part they took in connection with the formation of the Societies thus far noticed, those that have grown in after years at Ffynongroew, Newmarket, Gronant, Gwaenysgor, Mostyn, Gwespyr, Glasdir, Axton, Berthen Gam, Rhesycae, Pentre, Caelcoed, as well as Lloe, Maesglas, and others that have been merged into larger Societies, are largely the result of their persistent and self-sacrificing labours. The history of this batch of Societies, where to-day we have good chapels, intelligent class-leaders and Sunday-school teachers, and, considering the population, good congregations, proves that the efforts of these pioneers have not

been in vain in the Lord. In several places the children of the pioneers are still pillars in the church, and the religion that entered the Tamblynses, Pierces, Evanses, Williamses, Joneses, and Robertses retains its hold on the families almost as if hereditary.

In tracing the history of Methodism on the southern side of the county of Flint, we must pause at Mwnglawdd (Mine-dyke), which place is really in the county of Denbigh and within about five miles of Wrexham. It was here the first Wesleyan Society was formed, and became the mother-church of many others in that locality. In the cemetery adjoining the Coedpoeth Chapel is a tombstone on which are these words : ‘In memory of Richard Roberts, who died July 10, 1845, the first member in connection with the Wesleyans in this neighbourhood.’ Richard Roberts had removed to Cofoia, near the Plasgwyn, from the neighbourhood of Llanelidan, in the year 1801, and shortly afterwards Robert Jones, Maesy-safn, had preached at his house. This was the first service held by a Welsh Wesleyan in the locality. Mr. Hughes visited the place ere long, as did Messrs. Jones (Bathafarn), Bryan, Jones (Corwen), and Games. The services were held in an old quarry near the present chapel, a place which, if not so well known as Gwennappit, has not unseldom been the scene of the same gracious influences. The first Society was formed in the house of Robert Blunt, by Robert Roberts, Bonwn, in the year 1803, the first members being Richard Roberts, Robert Blunt, David Jones, Alice Jones, Elizabeth Clarke, Edward Davies (Caeglas), Elizabeth Smith, Anne Rogers, and Elizabeth Roberts ; John Williams of Llandegla, who through rain and sunshine travelled over the mountain week after week to meet and lead the class. Robert Blunt was eventually appointed class-leader, and also became a local preacher. Shortly afterwards John Jones came to reside here, and was made a class-leader. He also began to preach, and eventually entered the ministry in 1809, and

was known as John Jones (2nd). Edward Ragg, a sweet singer, identified himself with the Wesleyans at Mwnglawdd, and his singing soon proved a great attraction. In 1804 the chapel was erected on a site known as Penrhyn (Top of the Hill), which had long been notorious as the place for betting, cock-fighting, and the like. Crowds assembled here regularly, especially on the Sunday. There was a stone with a round metal surface, on which the betting money was placed, together with other valuable treasures. The preachers of the gospel completely changed the character of the locality, and the stone was put in the wall of the chapel over the door, and is still visible, a trophy of conquest. The trustees were John Phenix, William Draper, and John Hughes, whitesmith, all of Wrexham; John Williams, Llandegla; Owen Davies and Stephen Games, Denbigh; and Robert Blunt, the leader. The Methodists of Mwnglawdd were most zealous and active, and determined to spread the flame far and wide. Being good singers, many would hold meetings at Brymbo, Hope, and even as far as Llangollen, singing or praying frequently on the way; the female members, especially Sarah Jones, Eleanor Blunt, Elizabeth Price, and Mary Jones, often walking fifteen and twenty miles to and from these distant places, their zeal and self-sacrifice bringing with it its own reward. Edward Ragg became a class-leader, together with John Jones ('The City' as he was called). Joseph Jones of Ysgeifiog was also a leader and local preacher at Mwnglawdd. His record furnishes the only instance with which the present writer is familiar of a Welsh Wesleyan who became a Roman Catholic priest, Joseph Jones having for many years charge of the papal church at Carnarvon. Robert Jones, father of Mr. J. Price Jones, the Grove School, Wrexham; Mr. Hughes, Richard Humphreys, John Jones, Elias Jones, and John Kelly were all class-leaders in connection with this Society. In 1841 it was decided to form a branch of this church at Coedpoeth, and Elias Jones and John Jones, the smith, were

appointed leaders at the new place. A second Society was formed at Bwlchgwyn shortly afterwards, which has also developed into a prosperous church. Mwnglawdd suffered considerably as the result of the formation of these additional Societies, and was for a time in a feeble state. A few English Wesleyans came to reside at Bersham, and they frequently joined with their Welsh brethren; their zeal and new methods of work were made a blessing to the Welsh section, and the chapel was again filled. The English Wesleyans were then compelled to erect a place for themselves. During this period of transition, Mr. John Kelly did most efficient service, and his labours were greatly owned of God. Mr. Charles Abel was appointed leader, and later, William Griffith —worthy men, intelligent class-leaders, and loyal Methodists.

When the Rev. William Morgan was resident minister, he succeeded in erecting a new chapel at Mwnglawdd, which was opened on Christmas Day 1859, the Revs. Owen Owen, Ebenezer Morgan, and John Richards conducting the services. The debt on the chapel was reduced to such a sum as could easily be managed. There were faithful women in this Society in the beginning, and others followed in their footsteps, such as Mary Kelly, whose life and death was a great blessing (seven of her sons being members of Society at Mwnglawdd at her death); Sarah Jones, ‘City,’ a member for sixty-one years; Martha Abel, a faithful follower of Christ for forty-five years at Mwnglawdd, and others named elsewhere. John Jones (2nd) began to preach at Mwnglawdd; Robert Blunt, William Hughes, and Elias Jones were local preachers raised up in this church.

The Coedpoeth Society, formed in 1841, soon became more numerous and progressive than the mother-church at Mwnglawdd. In 1842 an application was made for permission to erect a new chapel, which was in due time completed. When Elias Jones and John Jones, the smith, with twenty-five members of the Mwnglawdd Society, formed

the first Methodist church in the neighbourhood of Coedpoeth, they were confident of success, and anticipated the erection of a chapel. But it is doubtful whether they ever dreamed that in a comparatively short period Wesleyan Methodism would have become such a power in that vicinity. The chapel was well filled in a few years, and another Society formed at Fron Offa. In 1858 the chapel was enlarged, and the greater part of the debt paid off, and the following year Coedpoeth was made the head of a new Circuit, the Rev. William Morgan being its first superintendent. In 1864 an application was made for permission to build a still larger chapel, in order to provide accommodation for the demands of the steadily increasing population. This application was supported by an offer on the part of a leading member, who was also manager of some large works in the neighbourhood, of a large sum of money towards the erection, with a pledge that, with the exception of a loan without interest, no debt would be allowed to remain on the premises. The case was carefully considered by the District committee, and at the suggestion of the Rev. John Bedford, who was present at the meeting, and thought it a good case, was recommended to and sanctioned by the chapel committee. Before the chapel was completed, the gentleman referred to, who was also the treasurer, became insolvent, and for some years the stalwart miners of Coedpoeth contended most nobly against difficulties that would have crushed many a stronger and wealthier body. The various Circuits in the District, and friends outside, came to their rescue, and the zeal and efforts of the ministers and officers were followed by the removal of the heavy burden. The Nonconformist churches of Wales have been supported chiefly by the voluntary contributions of the working classes. The Welsh working man is not afraid of debt on the chapel, and the heroic manner in which he has struggled under heavy burdens for years, and out of small earnings given money to support the ministry and to pay for chapel building,

can only be justly judged by those who have visited the valleys and hillsides of Wales, personally inspected the many true Bethels, and joined with the natives to worship the Triune God. Coedpoeth Wesleyans have conquered their difficulties, have now one of the largest Societies and Sunday schools in the District, and form the head of one of the most active and powerful Circuits in Welsh Methodism. Few Circuits in the Principality have had such a good supply of local preachers. Elias Jones, the first class-leader, was a local preacher, whose abounding zeal during many years gave him a position of influence in the Circuit. Griffith Evans, although in early life a man of no educational advantages, was a genius, and in his own way acquired a wide knowledge of men and things which was a wonder to all who knew him. His preaching was increasingly useful and acceptable up to the time of his death in 1892. Thomas Jones, born near Holywell, spent many years at Coedpoeth. A local preacher and class-leader, he has been for many years the most prominent musician in our body in Wales. The author of many well-known choruses, congregational tunes, and chants of recognised merit, his compositions have been in constant use in many of our Welsh congregations for more than half a century. A genial, faithful, good Methodist was John Williams, who entered the ministry in 1874, and died January 30, 1881, and who was brought up in the Coedpoeth Society.

Brymbo was first visited by the English preachers from Chester. Mr. Gardner, a most excellent local preacher, who removed to Birmingham in 1787, frequently proclaimed salvation for all on condition of faith at Wrexham, Caergwrla, and other places in the neighbourhood. Mr. Mainwaring, a manager at the colliery, was a class-leader and local preacher, who frequently conducted the services at Brymbo; whilst Robert Roberts and Samuel Bradburn, when local preachers, frequently preached in the locality. The services were held in the house of Mr. William Miller, an agent at the Brymbo

works, who was a good Methodist class-leader. Mr. George Perry, the manager of the furnaces, who had come from Broseley, Salop, was very energetic and useful in those days. He and his three daughters were sweet singers, and their musical services proved a great attraction. Mr. William Blunt, Dutton Williams, a brother-in-law of Dr. Warren, and Edward Williams, generally known as Edward Ragg, were zealous preachers, gladly welcomed at Brymbo prior to the introduction of Welsh Methodism.

Edward Ragg was very desirous of mastering the Welsh language, but he failed to accomplish the task. He was, however, able to give out one verse of a favourite hymn in the vernacular, and this was made the means of converting Jane Humphreys, who afterwards for many years became one of the most notable women in the neighbourhood. ‘Jinny Humphreys’ home, as it was familiarly known, became the welcome resting-place of Wesleyan preachers when they visited Brymbo. The gate near the Brynffynon farmhouse was looked upon by many of the early Methodists as a sacred spot. There Edward Ragg and others had taken their stand, and, sanctioned with the divine presence, it became truly hallowed ground. On Sunday, August 23, 1880, the day after the arrival of Owen Davies and John Hughes at Wrexham, the latter, in company with Mr. Richard Williams of Acre, went to Brymbo, where they found Mr. Mainwaring preparing to preach. He gladly gave the service to the bilingual preacher, who had been appointed by Conference to mission Wales, and this the first Welsh service by a Wesleyan at Brymbo was held in front of George Perry’s house at the end of Blast Row. Mr. Hughes was greatly encouraged by this visit, and the following Wednesday a Mr. Wilkinson, a professed sceptic and the proprietor of the works, informed him that if the morals of his workmen were improved he would provide for them a place of worship. If he did not build a chapel, as some had hoped, he lent them a large shed

in which to hold their gatherings from time to time, and in this shed the Welsh and English Wesleyans long worshipped together. Mr. Stephenson, an agent at the works, who was also a local preacher with the English section, a man of considerable influence in the locality, afterwards bought a piece of land upon which he built three cottages, reserving a portion as a site for a new chapel. In 1804 the chapel was erected, Mr. Stephenson exerting his influence with the working men in the neighbourhood in order to open the building free of debt. This worthy aim was accomplished, and for a few years everything went on well. Mr. Stephenson, however, began to exercise greater authority than the other officers and members were willing to concede to him, and when they remonstrated with him, they discovered that he held the property in his own hand. The Rev. Edward Anwyl, who had gone to Brymbo to fulfil his week-night appointment, found the chapel locked against him. Mr. Anwyl was not, however, to be prevented from preaching the gospel ; he invited the crowd who had come to hear him to follow him to the chapel yard, where he conducted a service, taking for his text, ‘Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.’ The service was one of marvellous power, the preacher’s clear and powerful voice was heard a long way off, the sermon created a stir in the neighbourhood, and secured the universal sympathy of the inhabitants. Mr. Stephenson was so ashamed of his conduct that he opened the chapel for a time. He, however, afterwards sold it as private property, and those who had been assisting to build and pay for it were compelled to pay a rental for its use. These troubles injured the work of God, and for years the Methodist Society was only a smoking flax. Mr. Richard Evans, the leader and a local preacher, left the neighbourhood, and the doors were kept open by John Edwards and Robert Blunt from Mwnglawdd. The Society had only three members, and for many years never reached more than fifteen. Mr. Edward Cunnah was

appointed class-leader, and later on George Pritchard. In 1836 the door of the chapel was again closed against them, and they retired to the house of Thomas Pratt, where the Society class meet regularly until a new chapel was erected. The friends were so disgusted in consequence of the treatment they received at the hands of the landlord, that they never made any attempt at securing the old chapel again, but obtained the long room of the Furnace Inn, which was then kept by Edward Jones. Rid of this disturbing element, however, the cause began to prosper. The friends were stimulated under persecution. They set about procuring a site and building a new chapel, and on October 1 and 2, 1837, the new chapel was opened for divine worship. It was a day of great rejoicing. The membership had increased to forty, and the debt on the new chapel was only £120. John Hughes and Thomas Charles were the class-leaders ; the latter was also a local preacher. Thomas Rogers, who had been identified with ‘the people called Methodists’ since about the year 1821, became the treasurer of the trust when the new chapel was commenced, a position the duties of which he discharged with diligence and credit up to the time of his death in 1859. His wife was the daughter of Jinny Humphreys previously referred to. The Society continued to grow steadily. William Pritchard, Evan Thomas, and Joseph Fisher became active and useful class-leaders. Fisher was a man of considerable originality, of great piety, and of undaunted courage, who was constantly warning the ungodly, and really became a terror to the evil-doers in the neighbourhood. William Hughes, Southsea, was a most diligent and efficient Sunday-school worker, who was instrumental in making that institution a great power for good in the building up of the work of God. William Hughes, Penrhos, his sisters Margaret and Sarah, and Mrs. Jonathan Jones, ‘Shop,’ were useful workers. The old chapel became too small, and a new and much larger one was opened for public worship, December 27, 1863. Accommoda-

tion was provided for about four hundred worshippers, the debt on the premises being about £300. The old members who had experienced the many anxieties and misfortunes of the first chapel had passed away, and could rejoice only from the hills of Salem. But though many of the workmen were buried, the work of God was carried forward and prospered. John Hughes, Glasgoed, was an able class-leader, a Circuit steward, an indefatigable labourer, a man who had the confidence of the general public, and was pressed into positions of trust. Joseph Humphreys was a most useful class-leader, and did good service after leaving Brymbo at Liverpool. Robert Jones of Big Level and his wife Elizabeth were greatly esteemed on account of their piety. There were mothers in this Israel whose names are still like sweet perfume, and will long live in the traditions of the locality, such as Fanny Rogers, Elinor Thomas (formerly Charles), Jane Jones, Elizabeth Peake, etc. The second minister was appointed to reside at Brymbo in 1861. In 1892 a large new chapel was opened for divine worship, and with its school-room, class-rooms, minister's house, strong Society, vigorous Sunday schools and other institutions, and its large and growing congregation, Brymbo has become a most important Methodist centre, in a large measure due to the able guidance of the resident minister, Mr. Thomas Charles, one of the most influential men in the North Wales District. John Rogers, Samuel Charles Hughes, Thomas Smart are devoted leaders, and the outlook is more promising than ever. Brymbo has depended much upon local preachers, and George Pritchard, Richard Evans, John Edwards, and David Jones were brought up in this Society, in addition to those previously referred to, who rendered much service to this and other churches in the neighbourhood.

The active Methodists of Mwnglawdd, Brymbo, and Coedpoeth were not satisfied with building up their own places. They were determined to extend their borders, and soon formed a Society at Fron Offa, and in 1862 successful

application was made for permission to erect a new chapel, which had to be enlarged in 1876. A small chapel was also erected at Cymau about 1860. New chapels have also been built at Glanyfrafon, Summer Hill, Nant, Gwynfryn, Rhos, Frith, Broughton, while the older chapels have been renovated. The spirit which prompted the early Wesleyans to visit various villages and distant cottages, holding prayer-meetings and class-meetings with a view to the extension of Methodism, has not been allowed to die in the Coedpoeth Circuit, and as the result of their united action they have been able to build up, among a purely working-class population, one of the strongest and most progressive of Welsh Circuits.

Leeswood, now a populous village on the way from Wrexham to Mold, was not visited by the missionaries in the early part of their mission in the county. In the year 1818 Thomas Ellis, Ystrad-cae-rhedyn, who had heard Wesleyan preachers at Treuddyn, invited Mr. Edward Pritchard, Llanferes, to his house to preach. Shortly afterwards the Rev. Samuel Davies came, and regular preaching was instituted in a place called Top of the Row. A young man by the name of George Venables, who had been converted at Hope, identified himself with the few Wesleyans, and his zeal in commencing and carrying on Sunday-school work was very encouraging. Ebenezer Davies, who had been connected with the Methodist Church for some time, came to reside at Leeswood, and he worked most assiduously with the few who constituted the Society in his new home. Venables and Davies in a comparatively short time became local preachers, and both proved useful men. The former on one occasion was preaching at the room, when, as he looked out through the window, he saw some people working in their gardens on the Lord's day. His righteous soul was so aroused that he went out and addressed them in plain fearless language. At first these men were very wroth against the preacher, but

finally they were prompted to attend the Sunday school and other means of grace, and to acknowledge that Mr. Venables had been made a blessing to them. In 1830 both preachers emigrated to America—a heavy blow to the Society at Leeswood in those days. A year before their departure the Messrs. Oakley, colliery proprietors, placed at their disposal a larger and more convenient building in which to hold their services. Thomas Woodfine, and shortly after John Prydderch, joined the Society, the latter being a singer and a man of eminent piety. He was a great help to the building up of the Leeswood Society. In 1859 it was found necessary to erect a new chapel, which was opened for divine worship in the month of October that year, Rowland Hughes, Richard Pritchard, and Evan Davies being the preachers on the occasion. With the development of the locality, the Society grew. Edward Prydderch, Thomas Jones, and William Williams were the class-leaders, and the second minister of the Mold Circuit, who was stationed at Leeswood, led another class. For many years Leeswood has been an important church, and has a good Society, Sunday school, and congregation.

Treuddyn, which has grown into a good Society, was to some extent the mother of Leeswood Methodism, and if not equal in numbers to her daughter, she has a respectable place in the Circuit. The first chapel was erected in 1823, and has since been replaced by a much larger one. If not so widely known, Treuddyn has been the home of a succession of devoted, diligent, whole-hearted, plodding Methodists. Richard Hopwood, a well-known Welsh minister, was brought up in this church.

Hope is another place in the immediate neighbourhood which was visited by the Methodist preachers. In 1801 Robert Humphreys from Ruthin preached in the house of John Williams, Neugae, but there is reason to believe that he had been preceded by other Methodist preachers. The

Neugae family had been associated closely with the 'Wakes,' which had been held regularly on their land, and as they persisted in allowing this wicked gathering to continue, the Wesleyan preachers conducted their meetings in the house of Edward Hughes, who then lived near the present Calvinistic Methodist chapel. Subsequently they removed to a place called Bedd-y-gwas (The Servant's Grave), which was tenanted by James Griffiths. Again was the ark removed, this time to the house of Samuel Kendrick, where for six years the services were regularly held. In 1815 Samuel Kendrick built a small chapel near to his own house, and though it was a plain and unattractive building, the gift was considered a satisfactory proof of his love to Methodism. The old chapel, in which many a blessing was received, was enlarged and beautified in 1859. The Rev. Lot Hughes says that when the trustees were greatly concerned as to the cost of having to cart sand from a distance, a mole-hill was thrown up near the chapel, which revealed to them a large quantity of the very material required close at hand, although none of the inhabitants had any previous knowledge that there was sand in the locality. Joseph Jones, George Venables, and Thomas Williams began to preach in this Society. The latter, who is still living, although aged, has occupied a very honourable position as a preacher of the gospel for nearly half a century.

In 1840 the erection of Pantymwn Chapel was sanctioned. Gwernymynydd Chapel was built in 1820, enlarged in 1857, and again in 1880. The Methodist revival, which made itself felt at Mold, Mwnglawdd, Brymbo, Treuddyn, and Hope, won its way into other villages on this side of the county, and in recent years Societies have been formed and chapels built in most of the villages, and Methodist services are held within the reach of almost every family throughout the county of Flint.

This county has reared a large company of Methodist preachers. From the time of Richard Harrison to the present

day men of ability and power have been called from thence to preach the gospel of Christ, whose names we have mentioned elsewhere. The two brothers, William and John Hugh Evans, came from Flintshire. The whole-hearted and efficient services of the elder brother in the pulpit and press have made him one of the leading and most deeply and universally beloved of Welsh ministers. John Hugh, who entered the ministry in 1860, was a man of rare intellectual ability, his imaginative faculties were of a high order, and his preaching was fresh, stimulating, and at times wonderfully effective. He was an eminent poet, and his literary reputation increased steadily up to the time of his death. As a lecturer in Wales, he had no superiors. His singular fidelity to principle, his refinement, dignity, and courtesy as a Christian minister, and the sweetness and beauty of his moral character, continued to shine with greater brightness until he passed away into brighter light beyond. The Welsh nation felt and mourned his loss, and the Methodist Church recognized that a prince had fallen. He died June 24, 1886, in the fifty-third year of his age and the twenty-sixth of his ministry.

Daniel Anwyl Williams, who entered the ministry in 1862, hails from Mostyn; Peter Jones (c), who began to travel from Newmarket, in 1875; the three brothers from Gwernymynydd; George Talalun, Joseph and Isaac Newton, who are now in the English work; William Owen Evans Son, of the Rev. W. H. Evans, and Philip Price from Bwlchgwyn, form a group of very promising young men who have recently entered the Wesleyan ministry.

The early Methodist preachers toiled hard under many disadvantages. It required the determination of a Harrison, the courage of a Bryan, the melting sweetness of a Bathafarn, the culture of a John Hughes, the ability of a Samuel Davies, the guidance of an Owen Davies, to establish Methodism in this and other counties. But the leaders could not have

succeeded in their work if they had not gathered around them a band of faithful men and women, willing to travel from village to village night after night and go to the quarry the next morning, willing to endure hardship in Christ's name, and for His sake to carry the glorious message of a free and full salvation into every corner of a county full of ignorance and cruelty. But these men and women God raised up. The foundations were firmly laid, and at the present time Wesleyan Methodism has a good hold on the inhabitants of Flintshire.

'The heights of great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight ;
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night.'

CHAPTER XXI.

THE COUNTY OF CARNARVON.

arnarvon—Mr. Wesley's Visits—Owen Davies—John Hughes—Bryan—First Methodist Preachers—Robert Jones—S. Ogden—R. M. Preece—Thomas Thomas (a)—Mrs. Jones, Glan Seiont—English Chapel—Bangor—Weakness of Society—William Roberts—John Pritchard—William Rowlands—Richard Pritchard—New Circuit—E. Evans, Erw Fair—Hirael—St. Paul—Tregarth—The Prayer-meeting and a Site for a Chapel—Agitation—Loss of Chapels—Rehoboth built—Chapels restored to old body—The Model Deed—Vulcan—Hugh Pritchard—Bethesda New Chapel—Rhiwlas—Conway—Richard Owen—John Owen, Gyffin—William Bridge—New Chapel—Bronynant—W. Williams—Colwyn—Colwyn Bay—Llansantffraid—Richard Jones—Llandudno—Llanfairfechan—Aber—Pwllheli—Evan Richards—Aberdaron—Cochymoel—Nevyn—Robert Williams—Criccieth—Llandwrog—Edward Roberts—Mrs. Edwards—Llanddeiniolen—Thomas Owen, Tyddyn—Jane Zion—Portdinorwie—Ellis Thomas—Llanrug—Harry Pritchard—Ebenezer—Hugh Owen—Llanbedrog—Rhostryfan—Penygroes—Preachers from the County, etc.

CARNARVON, which means 'Fortress on the Mona,' has long been considered the metropolis of North Wales. This was probably the reason why King Edward I., after he had conquered Wales, made arrangements in order that Edward II., the first Prince of Wales, should be born in Carnarvon Castle. Mr. Wesley passed through this town on Thursday, August 6, 1747, on his way to Ireland. Mr. Philips, who had accompanied him from Builth, returned from Carnarvon. Mr. Wesley not knowing the Welsh language, and the common people not knowing the English, his difficulties in finding his way to Moelydon Ferry to cross over to Anglesea, were greatly increased. Returning from Ireland, he passed through Carnarvon on September 28



REV^W GEORGE JONES, D.D.

... engraved by R. RAFFIN from a Photograph by VANDYKE, LIVERPOOL.

following. He spent a night in the town on February 23, 1748, and again the evening of May 19 the same year. Under date April 11, 1749, travelling *via* Dolgelly and Tanybwlc'h, he reached Carnarvon, and remained there during the night. On Saturday, March 24, 1750, he again took the same route, crossing the Moelydon Ferry to Monaland. On March 24, 1756, he travelled through a violent storm from Builth, Dolgelly, and Tanybwlc'h to Carnarvon, where he spent a comfortable night. The next day, in consequence of a heavy fall of snow, he had considerable difficulty in finding Moelydon Ferry. Returning from Ireland on Friday, August 13, 1756, Mr. Wesley reached Bangor, the region of which he describes as 'delightful,' the country from there to Penmaenmawr being 'more pleasant than any garden.' 'Conway Castle,' said Mr. Wesley, 'is the noblest ruin I ever saw.' On Wednesday, October 15, 1777, Mr. Wesley passed through Bangor and Conway on his way to Chester. His last visit to North Wales was on March 26, 1789. He called at Llanrwst, and probably spent the night at Conway, travelling the next day to Holyhead. He makes no reference to his preaching in any of these places. It is, however, very likely that he took advantage, either formally or otherwise, of preaching to the people with whom he stayed the gospel of peace.

The Rev. Owen Davies visited Carnarvon, and preached in the Calvinistic Methodist chapel, kindly lent for the occasion by the Rev. Evan Richardson, the pastor, on Monday, September 16, 1800. The service was conducted in the English language. On October 26 the same year, the Rev. John Hughes occupied the same pulpit, and preached in English and Welsh to a large congregation. Like Mr. Davies, he was kindly treated by Mr. Richardson. In the month of June 1802, Messrs. Jones (Bathafarn) and Bryan visited Carnarvon, and were heartily welcomed by Robert Jones (who formerly resided in the Vale of Clwyd) and Samuel

Ogden (formerly of Lancashire), two zealous Methodists who had come to reside in the town. The crier was sent out to call the attention of the public to the service to be held on the Penyrrallt Street that evening. He forgot the then strange term Wesleyans, and proclaimed in the streets of the town that two *Welsh Lions* would preach at seven o'clock that evening. Crowds assembled to see and hear the 'Welsh Lions'; the earnest, soul-saving exhortation of the preachers was accompanied by the agency of the Holy Ghost, and great good was accomplished. Mr. Bryan soon visited the town again, and asked those who wished to form a Wesleyan Society to remain behind at the close of the public service. Amongst others who responded to the call were Robert Jones, Samuel Ogden and his wife, Robert Owen, 'Boot,' and his wife, David Jones, watchmaker, Catherine Samuel, Mary Owen, Hugh Hughes, 'Bull,' John Williams, turner, and Robert Evans. These were the first members of the Methodist Society at Carnarvon. Catherine Davies, who became the wife of Robert Roberts, a minister referred to elsewhere, her sister Grace and brother Griffith soon followed, together with many others. An old playhouse in Penyrrallt Street was rented in which to hold their meetings. In 1803 Carnarvon was made the head of the second Welsh Circuit, which comprised the counties of Carnarvon, Anglesea, and Merioneth, John Hughes being the first superintendent, and William Jones, Llanelidan, his colleague.

Large congregations assembled in Carnarvon to hear the Wesleyan preachers. John Hughes preached to fifteen hundred people, and John Bryan to an equally large number at the launch of Captain Mackenzie's (Pwllfanog) ship, and each service left a deep impression upon the minds of the people generally. On April 11, 1804, the first quarterly meeting was held, Messrs. Ogden of Carnarvon and Templeman of Anglesea being appointed Circuit stewards. There was an increase of membership of 166, with eighty-six on trial, to

report, and the feeling of confidence which possessed the people was like the joy of harvest. There were four brethren who were accepted as accredited local preachers. Mr. Owen Davies, writing to Dr. Coke a fortnight later, expressed his great satisfaction with the progress made, and reported that he had bought for £100 a site upon which to build a chapel, and in a short time collected £60 towards paying for it. The chapel was erected, and on Sunday, October 10, 1805, dedicated to the service of God, Messrs. Owen Davies, Jones (Bathafarn), Bryan, David Rogers, J. Williams (1st), William Jones, and J. Maurice all taking part. It was probably the largest Wesleyan gathering hitherto held in North Wales, and left a deep impression upon the adjoining counties. The work was consolidated, and the Society continued to gather strength and influence.

The Wesleyans, however, soon discovered that their position was a very different one to what it had formerly been. The erection of a substantial chapel, the formation of a Society, and the stationing of ministers, indicated most unmistakably that they had come to the town with the intention of remaining there permanently. The people generally did not believe their doctrines, the Wesleyans were indeed considered dangerous heretics, and it was felt that their doctrines and methods, which seemed to lead so many of the people to join them, must be fully exposed. The Wesleyan pulpits had to be used largely to explain and defend the doctrines, and Mr. Bryan's sharp and pointed wit was a source of constant irritation to the hyper-Calvinists. David Rogers exposed the views of Dr. Lewis and Mr. Charles of Bala, and Samuel Davies, the young man on the Circuit during the years 1807 and 1808, was compelled to devote the whole of his strength to defending and explaining Methodist doctrines. It was a kind providence which favoured the Carnarvon Circuit with such able men—Bryan, Rogers, and Samuel Davies working the Circuit at such a time gave them the strongest staff

possible. These storms drove the people to read and study their Bibles, the result of which was that the truth took a deeper root and a firmer hold of those who had been hesitating. Many who had been trained under Calvinistic influences began to feel that the Word of God and their common-sense led them to accept a universal Saviour, and they identified themselves with the Wesleyans. The chapel was so well filled that by the year 1815 the trustees were obliged to enlarge their accommodation, which they did by taking in the schoolroom. When the Rev. Hugh Hughes, who was superintendent of the Carnarvon Circuit in 1821–22–23, came to reside in the town, he found a flourishing and influential church, and he refers to the more sympathetic recognition of the Wesleyans by other denominations. The Circuit continued to prosper during his superintendency. The Llanrug Chapel was erected, chapel debts were paid off, and a site was bought for a new chapel at Carnarvon. The chapel, which was the largest Welsh Wesleyan place of worship in the Principality, was erected during the ministry of William Davies (Africa) and Lot Hughes, and from its pulpit the superintendent conducted the first service, April 9, 1826, preaching on the word ‘Ebenezer,’ the name given to the sanctuary. The great meeting in connection with the opening was held the 14th and 15th of the following May, when Jones (Bathafarn), Hugh Hughes, Richard Harrison, Samuel Davies (1st), David Williams, John Williams (2nd), Edward Jones (3rd), and several others took part in the services. The chapel cost about £4000, which was a heavy responsibility. But chapel debt was not considered a great trouble by the old Methodists, if they could manage to pay up the interest, and in this case after thirty years there remained a debt of £3500. During the superintendency of the Rev. Methuselah Thomas, and owing to the renewed energy of the Rev. Lewis Jones, the debt was, however, reduced to nearly half the amount.

Robert Jones, to whom we have previously referred, became a local preacher and a leading and wise counsellor in connection with the formation and growth of the Carnarvon Society. William Evans, who entered the ministry in 1805, was very active and useful in connection with cottage prayer-meetings prior to his leaving his native town. John Jones, John Parry, Richard Hughes, and Hugh Parry were local preachers and influential leaders of the Society. R. M. Preece, a native of Cowbridge, a Justice of the Peace, who with the Rev. William Davies (1st) laid the foundation-stone of the Ebenezer Chapel, was for many years a very acceptable preacher and a most active worker. Mr. Preece was instrumental in bringing Mr. Bryan back to Carnarvon in 1831. Mr. Bryan had been carrying on business as a grocer in Leeds for seven years, was very useful and greatly beloved by his fellow-workers in the Yorkshire town, and had no intention of leaving his English home, although at times he longed for mountainous Wales. Mrs. Bryan's health was, however, giving way, and the medical attendant advised her to seek some more congenial atmosphere. Mr. Preece hearing of this wrote to Mr. Bryan suggesting that he should reside at Carnarvon, and in 1831 Bryan returned to the land of his fathers, entered heartily into every branch of Christian work, and up to the time of his death, the end of May 1856, he was a tower of strength to the Society at Carnarvon and the Circuit. John Morris was a local preacher well known and highly respected throughout the District. Griffith Davies, Robert Jones (2nd), and Robert Roberts did good service in their day. Hugh Humphreys, one of the largest publishers in Wales, and Mayor of his native town, was a very acceptable local preacher for many years. John Thomas, Market Street, a most intelligent Circuit steward and local preacher, was a strong pillar in this church, and greatly respected by his fellow-townspeople. John Williams, a man of considerable ability and culture, Robert Owen, George Gregory, and John Jones

also preached here full and free salvation. Hugh Jones (B), who is the secretary of the North Wales District, and one of the brightest stars in the firmament of the Welsh pulpit, was brought up in this church. Thomas Thomas (A), who began to preach at Aberdare, was a native of Carnarvon. He was an able author and editor, and after travelling some years in Wales entered the English work, and died suddenly at Ulverston, May 1, 1888, in the fiftieth year of his age and the twenty-sixth of his ministry. He was a most genial, lovable, devoted minister, and, if not fluent in delivery, an able preacher. John Pierce, who is a highly respected minister in the Welsh work, was trained in the Ebenezer Society. Robert Williams, Mr. Jones (London House), Thomas Evans, Henwaliau, were also faithful officers, and the Joneses of Glan Seiont will long live in the history of the church. The late Mrs. Jones was one of the most exemplary of Christian ladies. In conversation with her minister on one occasion, reference was made to the death of a rich Methodist who had left large sums in his will to be given towards various Connexional funds. ‘Yes,’ said Mrs. Jones, ‘but my conscience would not allow me to give it to God when I could not use it myself. It would have been more Christ-like if Mr. A—— had given more largely when he lived, then he wouldn’t have had so much to give after his day.’ This devout woman practised as she taught, and gave largely and unostentatiously during her lifetime.

There were other Christian women connected with the Methodist Church in Carnarvon, eminent for their zeal and piety, whose names are written above, and whose works still follow them in the early traditions of the town. Their long journeys to love-feasts and anniversaries, and their inspiring testimonies live even if their names are lost. The Carnarvon Society has never lacked good leaders. The names of Robert Williams (1st) and William Roberts (2nd), John Pritchard, William Hughes, and others previously mentioned will suffice;

while more recently, the fidelity of the Pritchards, Williamses, Joneses, and Hugheses show that the present generation exhibit the zeal, energy, and loyalty of their ancestors.

During the superintendency of the Rev. Evan Evans (A), a scheme was formulated to reconstruct the chapel, and completed under the guidance and energy of the Rev. Hugh Jones (B). The chapel and premises were made second to none in the District; the opening services were conducted by the Revs. Evan Evans, John Evans (B), Hugh Hughes, and others, August 26, 27, 28, 1876, when a large sum of money was raised and a new period of prosperity inaugurated.

When John Hughes (1st) was appointed superintendent of the Carnarvon Circuit, he found an English Wesleyan who had been a local preacher in Lancashire and continued zealous in his fidelity to Methodism prior to the formation of the Methodist Society in that town. He was appointed the first Circuit steward. His house was the home of Wesleyan preachers. After doing all in his power to assist in the formation and development of the Welsh Wesleyan Society in Carnarvon, he then did his best to form an English Society there and also in Bangor. For many years he walked every alternate Sunday to and from Bangor to preach to a few English people at three o'clock in the afternoon at the close of the Welsh service. His business was that of a hatter, but his thoughts were more fully occupied in building up Wesleyan Methodism. There were not many residents who could use the English language in those days. But Mr. Ogden and a few others continued steadfastly plodding away, and in 1830 an English minister was appointed to labour in Carnarvon. In 1831-32 James E. Moulton was stationed there, and in December 1834 Dr. Newton opened the new chapel; the Rev. R. Leake, who was then the superintendent of the Circuit, also preached on the occasion. The generosity in connection with the erection of the chapel attracted a great deal of attention, considering that the membership was very

small. In 1837 the whole Circuit, which included the counties of Carnarvon and Anglesea, only returned a hundred members, notwithstanding that there were two ministers on the ground. In 1883, during the superintendency of the Rev. George H. Camburn, a new chapel was erected, which is in every respect worthy of the Methodist Church in that fine old town on the Menai. At the present time Wesleyan Methodism, English and Welsh, has a respectable position in Carnarvon.

The city of Bangor (the name signifies ‘a high choir or chief college’) was established it is supposed as early as the year 525 by Deiniol ab Dunawd. In the beginning of the present century its population was under two thousand, and notwithstanding its cathedral, it was not considered of great importance by the Welsh people. Its growth, however, has been rapid in population and importance, and on account of its colleges, cathedral, and especially of its beautiful scenery, it is one of the most attractive cities in the Principality. Messrs. Owen Davies and John Hughes visited Bangor, September 12, 1800, on their way to Anglesea, but there is no reference to their having preached on that occasion. In 1803 Mr. John Maurice preached in Bangor in the open air, a large company listening attentively to the preacher of the ‘new sect.’ Shortly afterwards Mr. Maurice was there a second time, preaching near the house of Richard Griffith, a shoemaker. When Mr. Williams, Pentir, the owner of the house, heard that there had been preaching on his property, he sent word to the tenant threatening to evict him if he dared allow the Wesleyans to desecrate his land any more. When John Maurice, accompanied by Robert Jones, Carnarvon, came to Bangor the next time, the shoemaker would not allow them to preach near his house, so he appealed to the assembled company if any one would give him permission to stand by their door to preach the gospel. Mrs. Grace Griffith, a Congregationalist, replied, ‘I have a house out of

which no one can eject you, and to which you are welcome.' The Methodist preacher accepted the invitation, and followed by the crowd he proceeded to the western side of the city, near the entrance to the Friars, where he preached the gospel of free grace. The next time Mr. Maurice preached near a public-house called 'The Virgin.' In 1804 Mr. John Hughes was allowed to preach in the house, and as a large company stood outside in the yard, the preacher, taking his stand on the top of the stairs with the window open, was able to make his voice reach the whole crowd. After that service 'The Virgin,' then occupied by Mrs. Margaret Davies, became the regular preaching-place for some time. A house was afterwards rented near Townhead (Pendre), which was made as chapel-like as possible, and in 1808 this house and the adjoining cottage were purchased, and the first Wesleyan chapel in Bangor erected on the site. Owen Davies, John Jones (Corwen), and John Foulkes of Pant-Ifan were the preachers who took part at the opening services. The Society had been formed by Jones (Bathafarn) in 1805. About that time William Roberts, who had been connected with the Wesleyans since 1803 at Talybont, came to reside at Bangor, and was appointed the first class-leader. The Society was very feeble for years, consisting only of two women and the leader. William Roberts was the only one who could take any part in a public meeting, and he was so frequently called upon to do so that his faith was severely tried, and many a time he wept bitterly, and agonised in prayer as he thought of the smoking flax. He held on most persistently, however, till he saw the work of the Lord prosper in his hands. A John Evans cast his lot with them, and a little later Thomas Roberts. Roberts was a young man of superior ability and considerable culture, and became a great assistance to the little flock. He soon began to preach, and ere long entered the ministry, greatly to the loss of the Bangor Society. In 1811 John Pritchard came to reside at Bangor, and in him

William Roberts found a companion after his own heart, and they became like David and Jonathan, working heartily together. About the year 1818 they purchased the old Calvinistic Methodist chapel, which was larger and better than the old chapel in Pendre. This change did not, however, benefit them as they had anticipated, the premises were not central enough for the population. Some time afterwards Evan Jones, a local preacher and a most valuable helper, removed to Bangor, and his zealous activity was a great boon to the few Wesleyans. William Rowlands, who had also commenced preaching in the Pwllheli Circuit, removed to the city of Bangor, and his diligent and efficient labours in the interest of Wesleyan Methodism were made a great blessing. There were no young people connected with the Society, and the few old people had hitherto failed to elicit their sympathies. When William Rowlands, full of zeal, thirsting for knowledge, came to Bangor; he formed a Bible class in the cottage of William Parry, and a few young men were attracted to attend. Rowlands, who became one of the best readers in the Principality, was wonderfully apt in those days in the management of his class, and his week-night cottage Bible class became the meeting-place of several intelligent, knowledge-seeking young men. Richard Pritchard, who became one of the most influential and useful of Welsh ministers, regularly attended this class when a boy, and was taken by the hand by the teacher, and finally Rowlands and Pritchard reached a position of eminence in the ministry of the Methodist Connexion.

About that time Mr. R. M. Preece of Carnarvon, himself a schoolmaster, who, through his ability, culture, and powerful preaching of the gospel, had become one of the most useful and popular of public men in the District, gave particular attention to Sunday-school meetings. The Sunday school decided to study a chapter from the Bible or from one of the catechisms on one of the fundamental doctrines, such as ‘Man’s moral agency,’ ‘The universality of the death of Christ,’ ‘Conditional

perseverance in grace,' etc.; and on the appointed day the school would go to the chapel in some other town or village to be examined by some minister or eminent layman appointed to undertake the work. The catechist would have authority and be expected to ask questions other than those printed in the text-books, and these *viva voce* examinations furnished the opportunity for thoughtful people to get light on the doctrine under consideration. These were red letter days in the minds of the young people connected with the Sunday schools. The superior biblical, theological, and metaphysical knowledge of the Welsh people, and we may add their fluency in speech, is largely accounted for by their careful training in the Sunday school. The fact that Mr. Preece, who was made a Justice of the Peace, gave his time and support to this branch of work, greatly encouraged the young people. And young men like William Rowlands and Richard Pritchard, concentrating their energies in the interest of the work, caused a shaking amongst the dry bones. Bangor was at this time rapidly developing into an important commercial centre. The quiet, half-dead, cathedral-village-city was showing signs of new life, and a determination to regain and probably eclipse its former renown. The Rev. Hugh Hughes, superintendent of the Circuit in 1821–22–23, refers to the growth of the Bangor Society as being exceptionally encouraging. The young men assisted in the formation of the cause at Aber, a village near Bangor. The friends began to feel dissatisfied with the old chapel, and it was also becoming too small and inconvenient. In 1827 a new chapel was erected in the centre of the city, called Horeb, and was opened for divine worship on the Easter Sunday, the Revs. Richard Bonner, Edward Jones (3rd), David Morgan, and William Jones being the preachers who took part. The trustees of the new chapel were chiefly members of the Society at Carnarvon, which was the head of the Circuit. In a few years the chapel was well filled, the need of a new one was felt, and in 1838 Horeb,

which was only eleven years old, gave place to a new, better, and much larger chapel. On Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Monday 1839, the Wesleyans of Bangor were having great gatherings and showers of blessing in connection with the dedication of their second Horeb. The first meeting in the new chapel was one in connection with the centenary of Methodism, at which R. M. Preece of Carnarvon presided. The Revs. R. Bonner, David Evans (1st), Richard Pritchard, J. L. Richards, and Edmund Evans were also present, and took part in the meetings, the Revs. Methuselah Thomas and Lewis Jones being then the Circuit ministers. Horeb, like other chapels in those days, was heavily handicapped with debt. No less than £2300 was due—a burden for the trustees to carry, and to many of the friends a cause of anxiety. The formation of the North Wales Loan Fund was a great help to Bangor. An effort to raise £800 to meet an equal amount given by that fund was followed with success. The friends paid off £1600, and were also encouraged to struggle with the remaining debt.

The labours of Samuel Ogden were not in vain, although the fruits were seen but very dimly in his day. The Welsh friends at Horeb sympathised with the few English Methodists, and so far as they could give their assistance in establishing a Society for them. Eventually the James Street Chapel was erected, and at the present time, if not numerous, the English Society there is healthy and respectable. In 1852, largely through the instrumentality and generosity of Mr. Evan Evans, Erw Fair, a chapel was erected in a neglected part of the city near the port. The success in connection with this movement was realized in a short time. The Hirael Chapel, as it was called, soon became too small, and it was found necessary to erect a gallery in order to accommodate the people who wished to worship there.

In 1843 Bangor was made the head of a new Circuit, and William Powell was appointed its first superintendent, with

Thomas Morris as his colleague. Bangor soon became one of the choice Circuits, consequently has always been able to attract the ablest ministers in the Principality. The city was so rapidly developing that, notwithstanding there were two chapels erected for the Welsh people and one for the English, further needs were manifest. The population was growing in another direction, and Mr. Evan Evans of Erw Fair, with his eyes and heart open, secured a site, erected a large chapel, schools, and minister's house, at a cost of over £5000, which he presented to the Connexion free of debt. St. Paul, as the new chapel is called, was opened October 25, 1858, during the superintendency of the Rev. Thomas Aubrey, Rowland Hughes, Richard Pritchard, Dr. William Davies, Lewis Jones, and Isaac Jones taking part in the opening services. The following year the book-room was removed from Llanidloes to Bangor, and the city became the most important centre of Welsh Methodism.

William Roberts was the first class-leader of the Bangor Society. Roberts, with other companions, had gone to hear Jones (Bathafarn) preach the first time he visited the neighbourhood of Llandegai, with the intention of disturbing the service; but the sweetness of the preacher's voice and spirit, and his manner of presenting the gospel, so affected him, that he was won over entirely into sympathy and admiration of the man he had come to annoy. Shortly after, when William Jones of Llanelidan preached near John Walker's public-house, Talybont, Roberts was deeply wrought upon, and decided to cast in his lot with the despised Methodists. His removal to Bangor was a great blessing to the work in that city, and up to the time of his death, October 17, 1843, in season and out of season, in weakness and trembling, he continued 'stedfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.' His companion, John Pritchard, being able to take charge of the singing, became leader of a large Society class and a tower of strength to the Society and the Circuit.

John Richards and Robert Williams were also leaders who needed not to be ashamed. A later group of leaders included Messrs. Evan Evans, John Williams, Thomas Lewis, men of position, influence, and great usefulness. Mr. E. Evans in his last will bequeathed large legacies in support of the District and Connexional missions, not forgetting the Societies in Bangor with which he had been so long connected. Mr. Lewis, who for many years has been one of the leading public men in the county, Mayor of the city, a Justice of the Peace, and a leading representative in his own District, has consistently rendered valuable services as a local preacher. The name of Henry Jones, Castle Bank, will long be respected and affectionately cherished as a class-leader and local preacher; while J. Thomas, P. Williams, T. Jones, J. Pritchard, and F. Harrison have all proved faithful leaders of Society. The Societies have also been blessed with stewards who have rendered in various ways such services as to give to Wesleyan Methodism in Bangor a leading position in the Welsh work. The names of Captain Jones, W. Rowlands, J. Jones, J. Griffith, J. Mitchell, T. Williams, and Henry Owen will remain prominent amongst many others; and with such good men as Alderman Edward Jones, Alderman J. C. Lewis, Mr. Hartley, etc., filling these positions, the status of Methodism in the city will be fully maintained. Bangor cannot, however, claim to have trained many for the Methodist pulpit. Thomas Roberts, who entered the ministry in 1807, and was called to his reward October 1, 1808, and Richard Pritchard, were the only representatives of the Bangor Societies in the ranks of the ministry. The latter entered the ministry in 1832, and died at Rhyl, May 12, 1882, in the seventy-second year of his age and the fiftieth of his ministry. Richard Pritchard was, however, one of the finest all-round men who have adorned the Methodist ministry in Wales—an able and effective preacher, a profound theologian, a historian of merit, an excellent superintendent, a social reformer, and a

thorough Christian gentleman. His work on *Infant Baptism* is justly considered to be the best defence of this ordinance in the Welsh language, and other books written by him will live long.

In recent years all the Bangor chapels have been thoroughly renovated and modernised, and are comfortable, commodious, and beautiful to the eye, and the barren soil has become a fruitful field.

When Jones (Bathafarn) preached near the Talybont public-house in 1802, there were people present who had come from the neighbourhood of Tregarth to hear him, and who were deeply impressed by his preaching. William Jones (Llanellidan), Bryan, John Maurice, and others, also preached in the locality. Services were held in the house of Griffith Humphreys, who lived at Lon Isaf, and later at Cae-erfin. Amongst the first-fruits were found Edward Griffiths and Jane Parry, Yard. In 1804 William Parry, who had been a member and a preacher for some time with the Calvinistic Methodists, identified himself with the new sect under peculiar circumstances. The visits of the Wesleyan preachers to the locality, and the universal redemption on condition of faith which they preached, led him to think, and the more he read and thought over God's Word the more deeply did he feel convinced of the truth of the new doctrines. The altered tone of his preaching soon attracted the attention of the Calvinistic Methodists, and, at an association meeting held at Carnarvon, W. Parry was questioned with regard to his orthodoxy. Mr. Robert Jones (Rhoslan) was the moderator, and said some hard things about him, but the only charge against him was that he was 'preaching like the Wesleyans.' The conversation was protracted, and Parry ultimately said, 'I shall be glad to retire and identify myself with the Wesleyans.' He left the meeting, and went home and immediately cast in his lot with the few disciples connected with the new sect. He was a man of superior gifts, a preacher of considerable

ability, and his services were highly appreciated. He frequently accompanied Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) on his missionary tours. William Parry was an active worker, and up to the time he left England did good service in connection with Wesleyan Methodism. The meetings were afterwards held in the house of William Owen, Penygraig; and from thence the ark was removed to an old workshop in a very dilapidated condition in the locality of Tyn-y-clawdd. It was found ere long that the old workshop was very little better than the open air, as in wet weather the rain fell copiously upon the worshippers, to their discomfort and danger; hence they were obliged to seek another resting-place. This was found in a barn which was held by a farmer of the name of Richard Hughes. This new home for the Methodist ark was made fairly comfortable, and as the work prospered it was improved. The old barn chapel was the centre of considerable spiritual activity, and became the home of many good Christians; but it was soon crowded out. In 1826, when Davies (Africa) and Lot Hughes were the ministers of the Circuit, they were blessed with a revival of religion, and many were added to the church, and the need of a larger place in which to worship God was felt by all. The difficulty was to secure a site. Colonel Pennant was the only land-owner, and as it was known that he was a zealous Churchman, and all the members were tenants under him or working for him, there was much fear in approaching him on the subject. Mr. R. M. Preece of Carnarvon, who was the leading man in the Circuit, drew up a petition and secured the signatures of a large number of the inhabitants, with a view of presenting it to Colonel Pennant. When the document was ready, the members of Society were called together for a special prayer-meeting, in which they earnestly asked their Heavenly Father to open the landowner's heart, that he might consider favourably their request. While they prayed, they witnessed a most gracious manifestation of the Divine Presence, which

filled the place, and gave them so much confidence that they went home believing that the victory had been won at the throne of the heavenly grace. Their request was granted, and the site of the Tregarth Chapel and minister's house leased at the low rental of ten shillings per annum. The chapel was erected and opened for divine worship on Sunday, September 29, 1829, when Evan Hughes, Edmund Evans, O. Owens, Lewis Jones (1st), and David Jones were the preachers. For two years the work prospered, and the ministers and friends were led to expect that they would have a strong church at Tregarth ere long. But in 1831, on the 8th August, a few discontented Methodists met together near Menai Bridge to express their dissatisfaction with certain methods of operation, and their determination to reform. The ministers were accused of assuming authority over the local preachers, of not working themselves as they ought to work, and it was said that their methods, while adapted for home missions, were not such as would tend to build up the Church of God. The rule which prevented local preachers going beyond the limits of their own Circuit without the approval of the superintendent minister was specially condemned and designated tyranny and oppression. The rule was, however, never more fully justified than on that occasion. If men are allowed to neglect their own appointments, to the disappointment of their congregations, in order to spread discord and dissatisfaction in other Societies and Circuits, it is essential that, in the interest of the work of God, some one should have authority to act promptly until such cases are considered by the full authority of the Church. Mr. Owen Owen, who was the leader of the agitation, was a very acceptable preacher, in whom David Rogers had taken great interest, and taken by the hand. The agitation was carried on chiefly in North Wales, many of the chapels were taken away, and the Wesleyan ministers were subjected to insults of the most abominable character. On entering the

Nevyn pulpit, one minister found a pig had been therein enclosed. One minister was in personal danger, having experienced a narrow escape with his life ; and other incidents of a similar character grew out of the agitation. The Tregarth Chapel was taken possession of by the agitators, and held by them for some years. But during the ministry of David Evans (1st) and Rowland Hughes in 1832–33, which attracted so much attention, the reformers were rapidly losing their hold of the people. Crowds were drawn to hear these great preachers in the old body, and a new chapel was erected, which was called Rehoboth. In 1836, when Richard Pritchard was stationed on the Carnarvon Circuit, his intimacy with Hugh Hughes (Tegai), a local preacher with the reformers, enabled him to discover that they were tired of their separation, and would be willing to take steps to return to the old body if they thought they would be welcomed. Mr. Pritchard probably assured his old friend that no difficulty would be placed in the way of their return, provided that they would accept unconditionally the doctrines and discipline of Methodism. A meeting was held in the Tregarth Chapel, when it was decided to return to the old body, and William Pritchard of Coedy-parc was deputed to see the Rev. E. Anwyl, then the superintendent of the Carnarvon Circuit. Shortly afterwards Messrs. Anwyl, Pritchard, and R. M. Preece met the representatives of the Tregarth Society, and an amicable arrangement was agreed to. Reopening services were held, at which Mr. Anwyl, Preece, and Hughes (Tegai) preached. The Bethesda Chapel was also restored to the old body at the same time. With these arrangements, Richard Pritchard had a great deal to do. Rehoboth was now useless, the materials were used as far as possible, and Mr. Preece did good service in collecting the money to pay off the debt which had been incurred in the erection of it.

The Tregarth and Bethesda Societies, once more united

with their old associates, continued to show signs of new life, and in 1857 a new Circuit was formed, with Tregarth as its head and Dr. William Davies its first superintendent. It was of the greatest importance to a new Circuit to have an able minister at its head, and it was a credit to the Circuit to secure such an excellent preacher of the gospel. The chapel soon proved too small and was enlarged, a minister's house was built, and Tregarth became one of the most important Circuits. The old lease had run out, and Colonel Pennant's agent had promised to renew it, and it was suggested by several of the friends that the chapel should be secured on the model deed. But there were some who objected to this, and the agitators were not lacking in zeal to prevent, if possible, the chapel being secured to the Connexion. The land agent hearing of this sent to say that the lease would only be renewed on condition that the chapel be settled on the model deed. It was also a condition that, if any of those who had contributed to the chapel objected, they were to have their money returned to them. A day was set apart for all such claims to be made, and a number, influenced by party feeling, assembled to claim certain moneys they had contributed. The number was larger than was expected; some, however, felt that the money was sacred, and returned it, few actually used it for other purposes. After this marvellous proceeding, the deed was signed by Messrs. T. Hughes, John Ellis, William Evans, W. Pritchard, W. Griffith, W. Jones, D. Thomas, H. Thomas, W. Williams, E. Evans, R. Griffith, J. Morris, J. Roberts, and Hugh Hughes. The trust-deed settled, the work prospered, and Methodism has held a respectable position, and Tregarth has been one of the most active Circuits ever since.

Tregarth Methodism can rejoice in having grown some stalwart Christians, and, notwithstanding its agitations, some devoted Wesleyans. In addition to the names mentioned, those of Owen Pritchard, Richard Williams, Grace Edmunds,

Mary Parry Pierce, Mary Pritchard, and Mary Moses are still verdant and affectionately cherished. The quarrymen are intellectually superior to any class of working men in the Principality, if not indeed in the United Kingdom. In going to and from their work during the dinner-hour and at every interval, they take delight in discussing great questions, such as 'The foundation of moral government,' 'Why good is good,' 'The functions of the will,' etc. The sermons preached in the various pulpits, speeches in Parliament and elsewhere, are daily weighed in their balances, and they have no hesitation in declaring their own conviction, whether favourable or otherwise. God's Word has a great deal of attention. It is no cause for surprise, under these circumstances, that Tregarth Society has grown many preachers. In that company will be found William Williams, R. Hughes, O. Pritchard, W. and J. Owen, L. Moses, O. Roberts, M. Williams, H. Hughes, J. Michael, R. Hughes, J. Williams, Ellis G. Williams, R. Williams, R. Moses, G. Moses, W. Williams (2nd), W. Owen, O. Williams, G. Owen, W. I. Parry, I. Ellis, W. M. Williams, E. Evans, H. Hughes, and O. Hughes. R. Hughes became a travelling preacher in 1842, was very promising, but was cut down, June 20, 1847, when only twenty-seven years of age. W. Williams, who entered the ministry in 1861, died at Brymbo, January 15, 1862. Evan Evans, after being in the Welsh ministry for a short period, went over to the English work and travelled in several important Circuits. Thomas Griffith, a young man of considerable gifts, entered the ranks of the ministry in 1868, but after a few years his health failed him, and he died at Portdinorwic, June 16, 1883, being only thirty-six years of age. Hugh Hughes, called to the ministry in 1866, is one of the most eloquent speakers in the Welsh pulpit, well known throughout the Principality, and has rendered great services to Christianity as a preacher and lecturer. Owen Hughes and R. W. Jones are indefatigable

ministers of the gospel. All these men were brought up in the Tregarth Church. The Tregarth Methodists were zealous for the extension of Methodism, and they succeeded in establishing Societies in other villages in the neighbourhood.

The Bethesda Society, which was led astray during the agitation referred to, returned about the same time as Tregarth, and though for many years a comparatively feeble Society, it held its own, and gradually gathered strength. The Bethesda Methodists were chiefly connected with the Penrhyn Quarries, and, like their fellow-workmen in that locality, were zealous and intelligent readers. Mr. Hugh Pritchard of Ogwen Bank, a native of Tyn-y-coed, near Nevyn, who removed to the neighbourhood of Bethesda about the year 1819, where he continued to reside, except during a short interval, up to the time of his death, February 1, 1872, in his hundredth year, was a man of exceptional ability. He was a great reader, possessing a retentive memory, a fluent Welsh and English speaker and writer, with something more than a smattering of the classical languages. In his early days he had taken an active part in the theological controversies, and in his later years exulted in describing the Calvinistic discussions in the early days of Wesleyan Methodism. Twelve months after he had joined the Wesleyan Society he was appointed a class-leader, and also occupied the position of Circuit steward of the Carnarvon Circuit prior to the formation of the Tregarth, Bangor, or Pwllheli Circuits.

During the agitation which resulted in the loss of Bethesda Chapel to the Wesleyan body, Mr. John Jones removed from Bettws, Abergele, to reside in that place. He was a zealous Wesleyan Methodist, and never hesitated to defend the old Connexion. For three years he walked to the Rehoboth Chapel, and when the Bethesda Chapel was given back to the Connexion was active and helpful in bringing about the reconciliation. For many years he was class-leader, super-

intendent of the Sunday school, and Circuit steward ; also writing a great deal to the various periodicals, and he published two small books. On one occasion he went with another worker to see a sick member of the Wesleyan Society, and when he entered the house he found the curate therein, who, like some of his brethren, denounced the Nonconformist ministers as imposters, and so stirred the righteous soul of John Jones that he exposed through the press the bigotry of the clergyman, greatly to the satisfaction of a large majority of the people. He died, conscious of victory through the blood of Christ, August 18, 1879, aged seventy-six, and like that of Hugh Pritchard, the name of John Jones the watchmaker will long be cherished by the Methodists of that District.

The development of the Penrhyn Quarries drew many families to reside in the neighbourhood, and with the growth of the population the need of greater facilities for divine worship was felt. A small chapel was erected nearer Bangor called Salem, another called Peniel, and a third at Rhiwlas. In 1870 the District meeting sanctioned the erection of a new chapel at Bethesda, and also at Llandegai. During the ministry of the Rev. John Evans, Eglwysbach, the preacher's energy and power not only inspired the people, but further lifted Wesleyan Methodism out of the old rut. A beautiful and commodious chapel was erected in a prominent position, and Bethesda has ever since been a strong Methodist centre, doing a great work. The Tregarth Chapel itself became too small, and recently a second chapel, called Gorphwysfa (which means 'resting-place'), was erected,—a most attractive and comfortable place of worship, where many 'have found rest for their souls.' All these chapels are well attended, there are good Societies, an intelligent band of class-leaders and church officers, working harmoniously together, with prospects brighter than ever.

Conway, a small town, built by Maelgwyn Gwynedd in 581, was then called 'Caer-Cyffin,' which signifies the border-

fortress. The Welsh name, Conwy, signifies 'chief' or 'fair water,' and refers to the beautiful river on the northern side of which the town and the magnificent ruins of the old Castle are seen to-day. Mr. Wesley describes the old Castle as the noblest ruin he had ever seen. Dr. Coke on his way to the Irish Conference in 1796 preached in the Calvinistic Methodist chapel, Conway. In 1800, on their first visit to Carnarvonshire, Messrs. Owen Davies and John Hughes called at this town, and were very kindly treated by Mr. Parry, a Calvinistic Methodist, and arranged to preach in his chapel on their return from Anglesea, September 16, 1800. Mr. Hughes, returning from Anglesea, and Mr. Davies, from Carnarvon, accidentally met on the road on their way to Conway; the first-named preached partly in Welsh and partly in English to a small congregation. Shortly afterwards Mr. Hughes preached to a larger congregation in the same chapel, and Mr. Parry entertained the preacher at his own home. In 1802 Messrs. Jones (Bathafarn) and Bryan, after deciding to preach in Castle Yard, went from house to house inviting the people to come and hear them preach, but the promises were not of a very cheering character. At the appointed time and place the Methodist preachers were present; Mr. Jones gave out the hymn, and they began to sing, the sweetness of their voices attracting many hearers. After Mr. Bryan had been preaching for about ten minutes, two constables came up with a command from Mr. Williams, Plasisaf, a magistrate, that they must cease preaching at once, as the Yard had not been recorded as a place of worship. The preacher was desirous to obey the law, and suspended the service. Mr. Jones, however, informed the company present that some place would be secured and recorded as soon as possible, and they would come to Conway again to preach the gospel of free grace. This interference was due to the clergyman, who, like his brother from Abergele, was determined not to let the Wesleyans have peace. Before

leaving Conway, the preachers hired an old barn near the Castle, and proceeded to Bangor, and the room was recorded as a place of worship. A fortnight later, on the Sunday afternoon, Mr. Jones came to Conway, and a large crowd of people came to hear him in the barn, but before he had proceeded far with the service, the two officers came again, and demanded the preacher's authority for preaching there. Mr. Jones entreated the officers to allow him to conclude the service, after which he would be able to give them perfect satisfaction, a request which they positively declined. The congregation profoundly sympathised with the preacher, many of the people became excited, and were very angry with the officers. Mr. Jones handed to the officers his licence to preach, and a certificate showing that the barn had been recorded as a place of worship. When these documents were presented to the magistrate, he was taken aback, sent the officers to the preacher to express regret that he had been interfered with, and promising protection in the future. The clergyman who was supposed to be the cause of the troubles was stoutly condemned by many of the people. The following year, after preaching in the old barn, Mr. John Hughes formed the Society at Conway. About that time Mr. Edward Edwards, who had been connected with Methodism for years at Runcorn, and for eight years a class-leader, returned to his native place, and became the first class-leader. William and Margaret Mark, William and Jane Thomas, William and Anne Roberts, Hugh Thomas, Ellen Parry, and others, became members of the Wesleyan Society. As in many other places, this prosperity was followed by a period of weakness. A young man by the name of Richard Owen was first brought to hear the Wesleyan preachers, then to the Sunday school, and he afterwards identified himself with the people of God. When they lost Edward Edwards, Richard Owen was made the class-leader, May 1815, by the Rev. William Hughes. Richard Owen was a gardener in the employ of Colonel

Burrows, Penarth, and his labours in the church were abundantly successful. The finances, which had crippled the few faithful, were grappled with, and the friends were blessed with a revival of the work. Conway was then included in the Denbigh Circuit, which was worked by two ministers only. In 1824 the Rev. Hugh Hughes was appointed to the superintendency of that Circuit, and in the month of August, on his way to Denbigh, where he was to reside, he spent the first night at Conway. Like his great founder, he would not be without a service that evening; hence he preached in the old barn chapel, and in that service a young man of wild, reckless habits was led to Christ. That convert was a nephew of the leader, and was none other than the afterwards well-known John Owen (Gyffin), for some years one of the most sterling and successful preachers in the Principality. In his discourses he often made the law the schoolmaster to Christ. At times his ministry was salted with fire, and crowds so wrought upon that cries for mercy were frequent under his preaching. His later years, spent in comparative obscurity, were a great mystery, disappointment, and loss to the Methodist Church. The Conway Society had outgrown the old barn, and was in need of a new chapel, but there was one difficulty which blocked the way—they could not get a site. They often prayed earnestly that God would touch some heart and open the way for a place in which they could worship God. After considerable delay and many hindrances to progress, Richard Owen finally succeeded in persuading his master to give them on lease for sixty years a site, upon which a good chapel was erected, which was opened for divine worship, February 12, 1826, the Revs. Hugh Hughes, Davies (Africa), W. Rowlands, R. M. Preece, and Edmund Evans all taking part. The services were times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Mr. Richard Owen, whose work had been blessed in the building up of the Society, and who was so deeply interested in the erec-

tion of the new chapel, was taken ill the following April, and died July 2, 1826, aged forty-six. The loss was supposed to be irreparable. ‘God moves in a mysterious way,’ and the Wesleyans of Conway felt it hard to say, ‘Thy will be done.’

On the very day that Messrs. Jones (Bathafarn) and Bryan first visited Conway with the intention of preaching the gospel, Richard Lardner was born. His mother was one of the early converts, and under a sermon preached by the Rev. Richard Bonner, May 1823, this young man was convinced of sin, and shortly after identified himself with the Methodists of Conway, and at the death of Richard Owen he was appointed class - leader. In his relation to the Society in that town, he was what Joshua had been to the children of Israel after the death of Moses. He proved a most diligent and painstaking leader, and was greatly beloved by all who knew him. A sweet singer, his work was made a blessing to many by singing the songs of Zion. His health failed him, and when only thirty-one years of age the soul was carried away on angel wings to join in the song of Moses and the Lamb. William Bridge, who was greatly attached to Richard Lardner and wrote his biography (which appeared in the *Eurgrawn* for 1834), became a leading man in Conway, and up to the time of his death in 1886 a more loyal, devoted, intelligent, and all-round Methodist layman was perhaps never given to the Welsh Wesleyan Church in Wales. His genius in bringing before the brethren at the District meetings, incidents in the lives of early Methodists, coupled with his aptitude in quoting Scripture and the freshness of his own experience, gave him a unique place in the great annual gatherings in Wales. To many his sayings were a great blessing, and will long be remembered. John Hughes, John Williams, and Edward Jones were class-leaders of considerable force of character. Mr. Edward Jones, who has filled various offices in the Church and in the town, of which he has more than once been chief

magistrate, is also a local preacher. Joseph Thomas and O. Williams, preachers of the gospel, were also brought up in this church. In 1862 Conway was made the head of a new Circuit, the Rev. William Morgan becoming its first superintendent minister. Few Circuits have grown more satisfactorily than that of Conway. In recent years a new chapel has been erected, more attractive and commodious, worthy of the town with its beautiful surroundings and of the zealous and active Methodists connected with the Society. Through the zeal and liberality of the Rev. F. Payne, a small but beautiful chapel for those who prefer to worship in the English language has been erected at Conway, in which services are being held. A Society has been formed and a congregation gathered, which in the course of time will probably grow strong, and will meet a growing need in that town.

Bronynant was favoured by the preaching of the Methodist preachers at an early date. Mr. Samuel Bartley, who had heard Mr. Bryan preach on the mountain near Dawn, where many were converted, was so interested in the preacher and his doctrine that when he returned to his home he made up his mind he would invite him to Bronynant. Without hesitation or fear, he rented a vacant cottage, and sent a pressing invitation to the Wesleyan preachers to come to preach there. In 1804 Mr. Stephen Games, and shortly after David Rogers, preached in the cottage. The following year Mr. David Rogers formed the Society at Bronynant, Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Bartley; Owen Evans, Waen-tyno, and his wife; Robert Roberts, Pant; Jane Foulkes, Nantyglyn; Mary Owen, Glyn; and Jane Jones, Groes-yr-Eirias, being the first members. The Society was feeble for two or three years, having only the above mentioned. The preachers were able to visit them but very rarely; the services were held in the cottage and the houses of the people. An effort was made to secure preaching more frequently, and the effort

was followed with success. After a sermon by Lot Hughes at Bryntirion, fourteen gave their hearts to Christ, and with that meeting the few took heart, and the work prospered. In 1809 the friends determined to erect a new chapel; a site was secured, and the Wesleyans of Bronynant rejoiced in having a comfortable house in which to worship God. The Society gathered strength, greatly prospered, and became the mother of other Societies in the District. In 1818 there was a shipwreck in the neighbourhood of Llandrillo, and some of the members had acted in such a manner in connection with the spoils as to render it essential for the superintendent to enforce the discipline of the Church. His decision was objected to by parties concerned, and an agitation followed. An expelled preacher from Llanrwst heard of the dissatisfaction, and was soon on the spot defending the dissatisfied and urging them on in their opposition, and as the result the Bronynant Chapel was closed against its proper owners. Mr. Robert Thomas held a Society class in a cottage near the chapel, the members of which were returned with the Llysfaen Society. The agitators, however, gradually lost the sympathy of the people generally; the public conscience was on the side of the minister, and the chapel was again opened for divine worship by the Wesleyan body. The zeal and diligence of the workers resulted in further prosperity. The old chapel became too small, and was enlarged in 1840. Considering the sparsity of the population and other disadvantages, the Wesleyans have a good hold at Bronynant. The fidelity, courage, and Christian spirit displayed by Robert Thomas during the agitation, and his zeal and activity in after years, will be long appreciated by all who take an interest in this Society. The Bartley family, too, will ever remain in loving remembrance in connection with Wesleyan Methodism in the District. William Jones (A), who entered the ministry in 1843, and after forty-one years of devoted service in the most important of Welsh

Circuits, became supernumerary and settled in Liverpool, where he is still doing most efficient work for the Church, was brought up in Bronynant Society. His brother Daniel, who became a travelling preacher in 1846, and died at Llanrhaiadr, September 1, 1853, was converted and began to preach the gospel in the same Society. Daniel Jones was a hard worker, most scrupulous in the discharge of his duties, a good preacher of the gospel, faithful in life and happy in death; while John Williams (New House), John Williams, 'Shop,' and Samuel Bartley were acceptable and hard-working local preachers.

Mr. William Williams, who identified himself with the Methodists at Bronynant, where he also began to preach, removed to Colwyn, and after a while succeeded in beginning a Methodist Society in that interesting village. The services were held in the house of Thomas Hughes, Penbrynn. There were seven members of Society—William Williams, 'The Shop'; Daniel Jones, Parkiau; Thomas and Margaret Davies, Pwllymwn; Evan Evans, Werntyno; Peter Davies, and John Lloyd. They undertook the erection of a small chapel, which was opened for divine worship on Christmas Day 1832, on which a debt of £60 remained after the dedication. In 1861 the chapel became too small, and was enlarged. The debt incurred was burdensome for a long period, but in 1879 it was paid off. For years there was considerable difficulty in securing the chapel on the model deed. The proximity of the place to Bronynant, and the effects of the agitation there, followed by that of 1830, were the cause of this. The superintendency of the Rev. Richard Pritchard was successful in removing all these difficulties, and bringing the people to see that it was to their advantage to have the chapel secured on Connexional lines. In later years the charms of Colwyn Bay, with its exquisite scenery, attracted visitors from England, the village grew rapidly, and the chapel again became too small. In 1886, on December 4 and the three following

days, a very substantial and beautiful chapel was dedicated, the Revs. Richard Williams, the superintendent of the Circuit, John Evans (B), Hugh Hughes, Edward Humphreys, and David Richards, who had commenced the scheme, taking part. The Society at Colwyn has been steadily growing, and is now an important centre of Christian activity. Its development must have been very gratifying to Mr. William Williams, who was instrumental in forming it, and who for some years after the erection of the chapel was compelled to go from house to house to raise money to pay the interest of the debt on the old chapel. He lived to see the chapel enlarged, and a good congregation gathered there. Mr. Williams, 'Post Office,' as he was known in later years, was a local preacher of the old stamp. He was most powerful in prayer, exemplary in conduct, a very efficient class-leader, who after fearlessly walking along the banks of the Jordan for many months, surrounded by the prayers and gratitude of a host of his spiritual children, with the reflections of light from the other side, passed away to realms of bliss early on the Sabbath morn of March 10, 1861. His children are actively engaged in the same good work. John Williams, draper, has proved an able local preacher, and amongst other active workers should be mentioned Joseph Evans, Isaac Evans, and Ishmael Evans. The last-named entered the ministry in 1866, and has become one of the most deservedly popular of Welsh preachers. The old preachers, leaders, and members have passed away, but others fill their places, and the work goes on and is in a far more efficient state than it ever has been.

Colwyn Bay, which is one of the most pleasantly situated and attractive towns on the Welsh coast, with its pretty ravines, splendid plantation of fine trees, its beautiful walks, and grand sea view, can also boast of one of the finest chapels in the Principality. The generosity, energy, and good taste of the Rev. Frederick Payne will be manifest while stone upon stone of this beautiful sanctuary remains. The under-

taking was of gigantic proportions under the circumstances, and for a time it assumed a serious problem to the Methodist Connexion. But in the hour of need Messrs. Beckett of Whitechurch, Thomas Cole of Sheffield, Edward Hutchinson of Liverpool, and others, not only contributed largely towards the scheme, but stood by it and saw it completed to the satisfaction of all. At the present time it is the head of a promising Circuit, with a good membership, and every prospect of continued success. Mr. T. G. Osborne, J.P., one of the most efficient of modern teachers, has made Colwyn Bay rank amongst the attractive educational centres for the sons of well-to-do Methodists, and he has likewise assisted largely in building up the Methodist Society. There is also a Welsh chapel at Colwyn Bay, recently erected, which, with the two chapels in the neighbourhood previously referred to, show that Wesleyan Methodism is fully alive to the growing necessities of the locality, and has a good footing in that part of the country.

When Mr. Wesley was returning from Ireland in 1756, he went from Conway and spent the night in the house of William Roberts, called Plas-bach, in the parish of Llansantffraid on the Denbighshire side of the River Conway. William Roberts's family had been to Trevecca and knew of Mr. Wesley, and were delighted to welcome the Apostle of Methodism. Edward Linnell, the son of a Methodist preacher, who came to reside in the locality as an Excise officer, married the daughter of William Roberts, and afterwards entered the Wesleyan ministry. Bronynant was the chapel for this tract of country for miles round during many years. When William Roberts removed from Bodfari to Llansantffraid, he found that the journey to that chapel was more than his family could manage, and being too zealous a Wesleyan to make his home with those who preached Calvinistic doctrines, he determined to make an effort to establish a Society in the village. The mill was secured, and Messrs. O. Owen, Cimnel

and Samuel Davies (the latter then a local preacher living in Abergele) came to preach at Llansantffraid. The congregations were large, and several decided to join the Wesleyan Society. The Rev. William Jones (A), then a young man at Mochdre, was appointed class-leader, and with that zeal and devotion which has characterized him during his successful ministerial life, he soon built up a good Society class. Early in 1841 a chapel was erected in connection with which Messrs. Jones of Tanyrallt and Mr. C. Foulkes, Eglwysfach, rendered valuable service. When Mr. William Jones became travelling preacher, Thomas Williams was appointed leader, and he was further assisted by Mr. Hugh Williams, who also became a very useful local preacher. Henry Pritchard, who in early youth was led to give his heart to Christ, identified himself with this Society, where he began to preach, and from whence he entered the Wesleyan ministry in 1866. Mr. Pritchard is well known, and his able, pointed, and effective preaching of the gospel has won for him an honourable place amongst the leading lights of the Wesleyan pulpit of the Principality. Two other small chapels, called Carmel and Moriah, have been erected, and have been the homes of faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

In 1803 Mr. Richard Jones and his wife, then living at Towyn, went in a boat over the River Conway to hear the preachers of the new sect in the old barn near Conway Castle. As no preacher came, Mr. Edward Edwards, the leader, conducted the service, and preached a sermon which was instrumental in the conversion of Richard Jones and his wife, and they connected themselves with the despised Wesleyans. Mrs. Jones was a sister of the Rev. John James's mother. Dr. James, who in 1871 was President of the Wesleyan Conference, and Alexander T. James, were sons of the Rev. John James; verily a trio of eminent ministers of the gospel. Richard Jones and his wife, notwithstanding that they had the ferry to cross, were most faithful in their attendance at

the means of grace. In 1804 a cottage on the bank of the river on the Towyn side was taken, in which services were held and about a dozen members met in a class, Mr. Richard Jones being leader. They lost this cottage, and for a time held their services in the house of Richard Jones, smith, but his landlord objected, and the ark was then taken to an old storehouse at the lower end of Towyn, and in which the services were held till 1831, when a chapel was erected called Bethel. In 1833 John Jones, son of the old class-leader, was appointed to take his father's place. Robert Roberts, who had previously resided at Llansanan, removed to Towyn, and became a faithful class-leader. Thomas and Edward Twist were good class-leaders connected with Bethel; James Williams became a local preacher and class-leader; and Joseph, Thomas, and Robert Twist were most efficient class-leaders. Many of the old Methodists were abundantly blessed in their Bethel in Towyn. It was the scene of most gracious revivals on several occasions, where the arm of the Lord was made bare, and many were influenced to accept Christ as their King.

Llandudno, long rich in natural beauty, legend, and tradition, had in the early part of the present century so few inhabitants that no Methodist Society was formed there for years after its introduction into other places in the county. The copper mine attracted many into the locality, and the Isle of Tudno, as it was then called, began to develop. A small Society was formed, and in anticipation of the success of the mining operations, a good chapel was erected on the side of the hill for the Wesleyans in 1837. The mining operations were not successful, and the people who had been attracted to the locality soon drifted elsewhere; the congregation and Society became very feeble, and the debt more than the few could carry. Two of the trustees died; the Circuit was large, and small places were not able to secure much ministerial attention. A few zealous ladies interested in the chapel began

to work for a bazaar, which was held on the last days of July and the first of August 1854,—the first bazaar held in the Principality by the Wesleyan Methodists. The Rev. Richard Bonner, notwithstanding that he was then living at Beaumaris, took great interest in the movement, commending it in song to the Welsh people generally. The debt was grappled with, and a new era of prosperity began. The rapid development of Llandudno as a place of resort is easily accounted for. Few places in the kingdom present such a fine combination to attract the health or pleasure seeker. It possesses everything necessary to complete the equipment and the *ensemble* of a watering-place. The drive or walk round the Great Orme, with its rocks and precipices; the hollow dell in the cliff, called the Happy Valley, with its magnificent sea view; the mountain, with Tudno, the son of Seithenyn's church; the lighthouse and caves, and the old Gogarth Abbey;—all these unite the present and the past, nature and art, the rugged and the refined, in a rare if not a unique fashion. Then on the northern side are seen the Conway River, town, and Castle, the Snowdon Range, with Carnedd Llewelyn and Carnedd Dafydd fading away hill behind hill in an aerial haze on the horizon. Between the foot of Penmaenmawr and the opposite coast of Anglesey a silver stream disappears, one knows not whither. On the other side are seen Gloddaeth, the old residence of the Mostyn family; and beyond, the woods of Bodysgallen with delightful walks. No wonder that a neighbourhood so rich in historic lore, and where nature, art, and legend vie with each other in attractiveness, should have become one of the most fashionable holiday resorts in the three kingdoms.

The Wesleyan Methodists of Llandudno recognized the fact, and made a successful effort to meet the requirements of an increased population. The old chapel was erected on the side of the Gogarth Mountain, and with the development of the town in another direction was found inconvenient for the

population. It had also become too small. There were several families who were not satisfied with their position in the town, and were determined to secure a good site if possible, and build a better chapel. The site was secured in Lloyd Street, and a good substantial chapel, with school and class-rooms, was opened for public worship, June 28, 1874, and the following days, the Rev. Samuel Davies, Richard Pritchard, E. Pugh, J. H. Evans, J. Evans (B), Henry Pritchard, and others, taking part in the services. There were now families of position and influence connected with the Society, and the scheme was brought through with satisfaction. Mr. Samuel Bartley, like his father at Bronynant, was ready to make any sacrifice in the interest of Methodism, and in R. D. Owen he found a hearty, intelligent, business-like colleague; while William Evans, D. Evans, T. Davies, P. Roberts, H. Powell, and T. W. Griffith were willing and hard workers. The Williamses of Plastirion and Gadlys and the Evanses of Tanyberllen were most assiduous in support of the scheme. The Society in the Lloyd Street Chapel has grown in number and power, and is united and active. In 1862 Llandudno was made the head of a mission station, and a minister appointed to conduct English services. In 1864 the Rev. Frederick Payne was appointed to the new Circuit, and through his influence, generosity, and skilful superintendence a beautiful chapel was erected in Mostyn Street, which is one of the ornaments of the town. The English population was small, and the friends depended largely upon the summer visitors for a congregation, but gradually that state of things is giving way to more satisfactory and permanent work. Several influential families who have settled down in the town, as well as prominent tradesmen, are members of the Society; a good church is being built up, which is likely to become an important Methodist centre as the years roll on. Methodism, which began in the old barn near the Conway Castle under the threats and persecutions of the clergy and

magistrates in the beginning of the present century, has grown steadily in the neighbourhood, and at the present time there are three Circuits, with a number of magnificent chapels and large congregations, lacking neither in position, intelligence, or activity.

In the year 1800 Messrs. Owen Davies and John Hughes, on their way to Anglesey, passed through Llanfairfechan, Penmaenmawr, and Aber. No reference is made to their preaching at either of these places during their first visit. It is, however, probable that they made inquiries with a view to preaching the gospel at some future time. It has been said that Mr. Hughes preached under a tree before Tynclwt, near the present post office. Certain it is that Messrs. Jones (Bathafarn) and Bryan went on their first missionary journey to Carnarvon and Anglesey June 1, 1802. Reference has already been made to the reception at Conway. They proceeded to Llanfairfechan on their way to Bangor. There was an old soldier by the name of Robert Shon Ellis, who, under the preaching of a Wesleyan in England, was converted, and had returned to his old home to spend his closing years in peace among old friends. He was a godly man and a zealous Methodist, and was delighted to welcome Messrs. Jones and Bryan to his native place. Messrs. Jones and Bryan visited the village the second time, and formed a Society at Llanfairfechan. The preaching services were held frequently in the open air, at other times in the Penbryn farm, the class meeting at Gwern Hwllyn, and Owen Hughes, Aber, used to walk over, wet or fine, to lead the meeting. William Jones, Tanygraig, who was a singer, and his wife; William Owen, Pengell; Abraham Roberts and Gaenor Roberts, Gwern Hwllyn; Robert Roberts and his wife, Elias and Richard Williams, were amongst the first to join the Methodist Society. The few Wesleyans felt the need of a place of worship, but Lord Bulkeley, the owner of nearly the whole parish, through his agent, declined a site. The

development of the work was greatly hindered, and the friends were pained to find that the site had been declined, more as the result of jealousy of a section belonging to another church than the unwillingness of the landowner. After struggling together for some years, R. S. Elis continued in earnest prayer that the Lord would open the heart of some one to allow a site upon which to erect a house of prayer. It occurred to him to go and see Lord Bulkeley himself, and after much thought and prayer, the old pensioner crossed the Wailing Beach (*Traeth-wylofain*) into Anglesey. He stood before the landowner in his military attire, and was recognized by his lordship, who not only promised him the site, but also gave a donation towards the erection of the chapel, which was erected in 1820. There were several people of the good old type identified with the Society at Llanfairfechan, zealous, robust Christians, who died in the faith. Robert Hughes, Dryll-y-Madyn, was a most acceptable local preacher, and a man of considerable weight of character; John Williams, a young man of ability, who, after he had been preaching for a short time, went out to Canada, where he did good work; John Williams, Waen, father of one of the present leaders, was a Sunday-school teacher of eminent usefulness, who delighted in teaching the Wesleyan doctrines, to which he was zealously attached; Elias Williams, Richard Williams, and Griffith Hughes. The last named became a terror to the ungodly of the neighbourhood. When they found a number of young men playing pitch and toss, they would go with Bible in hand, stand near to the crowd, and begin to read out of it some striking passage, and then pray for them, and one after another the gamblers would slink away, or be constrained to listen earnestly to the prayers. With such men, assisted by devoted women, the work greatly prospered. In 1840 the chapel was enlarged, and at the present time there is a good chapel, which is commodious and comfortable.

The years of prosperity, however, were followed by most trying periods. The small holdings were made into large farms, with the result that many families were compelled to leave the neighbourhood; the works, too, were not prosperous, and the Societies at Llanfairfechan, Aber, and Penmaenmawr suffered considerably. A large proportion of the population emigrated to America or Australia, and the Societies were left in a very feeble state. The few lost heart, and for some years the religious life of the inhabitants was at a very low ebb. In 1858 a gracious revival was experienced in the locality. A young man had been reading about the great prosperity which crowned the efforts of Messrs. Humphrey Jones and David Morgan in Cardiganshire, and all present were deeply wrought upon. They all agreed to spend some time in secret with God, and to come from His presence to class. The following week there were only three present—the class-leader and two sisters. The three prayed, and the glory of the Lord filled the place. They sang and prayed, and prayed and sang, but could scarcely leave the place. They praised God through the tears that flowed profusely down their cheeks, and the following night there was a large attendance. The glad tidings had spread through the village about the marvellous class-meeting, and all the members were present. They were again anointed with the power from on high. The prayer-meetings were continued and were increasing in power, and the church was putting on her beautiful garments. After having a series of meetings for the church, they arranged for their own ministers to preach, and in a few nights a hundred and thirty-four persons made a decision for Christ, and identified themselves with the Wesleyan Methodists, sixty with the Calvinistic Methodists; and the work spread to Aber, Penmaenmawr, and to towns and villages north and south, hundreds being added to the churches. John Williams and Hugh Erryri have rendered most valuable services to Christ and Methodism in connection with this church.

Aber, a small village near Bangor, was visited by Jones (Bathafarn) in 1804, and with John Maurice preached near the house known as 'Lon Las.' They afterwards preached at Tynewydd and the Pentre-bach. A Society was formed, but it was slow in making progress. When the Rev. Hugh Hughes was superintendent of the Circuit, he gave a great deal of attention to Aber, and the Society showed signs of growth. Robert Rowland removed to the locality, and proved a great help to the little Society. Owen Hughes, who became a most zealous class-leader and assisted frequently in connection with Llanfairfechan; Rowland Williams, 'The Shop,' and his daughter Grace; Rowland Thomas, Rowland and Grace Pritchard, O. Hughes and his wife; the Hughes—William, John, Thomas, and Elizabeth,—all identified themselves with the Society, and rendered good service. An effort to secure a site only resulted in the offer of a most inconvenient place, far away from the population, by the steward of Lord Bulkeley, which the friends declined as useless. The Rev. William Davies (Africa), the superintendent, wrote to the land-owner himself, who, when the case was put faithfully before him, agreed that they had sufficient reason for declining the site offered, and gave them another in a convenient position. The chapel was erected and opened for divine worship, June 4, 1827, William Davies (1st), R. Bonner, and Thomas R. Davies taking part in the services. The work so prospered that in 1839 the chapel had become too small and a gallery was erected. Years after the people were compelled to leave their little cottages, give up the small holdings, and emigrate to other countries, with most disastrous results to the various religious institutions throughout that part of the county. The work has prospered in recent years, and the Society has more than held its own.

Within recent years Penmaenmawr has become a favourite resort with people who long for quiet rest. Its sheltered situation, walled in as by a circle of mountains, with its pure air,

long sandy beach, its beetling rocks and bold outline, forms one of the finest headlands in Wales ; while its early and abundant foliage, and an endless variety of scenery in the foreground, has made the district a delightful resting-place. Its proximity to Llanfairfechan, and the sparsity of the population, delayed the earlier formation of a Methodist Society at Penmaenmawr. In 1872, July 7, 8, and 10, a substantial chapel was opened for divine worship, which, with a new English chapel recently erected, provides for the Wesleyan Methodists who live at or desire to visit this most delightful spot. Welsh and English Methodists are provided for in every town and village along the Carnarvonshire coasts ; and when it is further borne in mind that all has been done within the present century, a cause for thankfulness will be found and a constraining influence to greater consecration to Christ and His Church.

Methodism has never taken the same hold on the western side of the county of Carnarvon as it has on its northern and eastern side. Calvinistic Methodism is a great power throughout the whole of the county, and especially on its western side. The influence of Robert Roberts, Clynog ; John Jones, Talysarn ; Michael Roberts, Pwllheli, with prominent laymen of influence and genius like Eben Vardd, etc., would probably account largely for this. Mr. John Hughes was the first Wesleyan preacher who visited Pwllheli (Saltpool). In January 1802 he preached to a large congregation in a dancing-room connected with the Penlanfawr public-house, which was occupied by a Mrs. Evans. Mrs. Evans's daughter became the devoted wife of the Rev. William Evans, one of the early Methodist ministers. Shortly afterwards Mr. Bryan visited Pwllheli, and preached in the yard of the Crown. Mr. Bryan's pointed, powerful, and fearless proclamation of Wesleyan doctrines would often irritate and invariably create discussion. Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) preached in the room of Penlanfawr, and his pathetic tones, sweet voice, and evangelical preaching were made a great blessing to many.

Mr. Jones formed the Society, and arranged for regular preaching in an old malt-house, where the services were held until the chapel was erected. Captain William Davies was one of the first who identified himself with the Wesleyans; he also was the first class-leader. John Jones, the crier; Owen Roberts, Glan-y-Morfa; Griffith Owen, the smith, and his wife; Elizabeth Ellis, R. W. Luke, and John Goodman were the first members of Society. Owen Williams, Customs officer, joined the Society, and he was a great acquisition for thirty years, being a faithful class-leader up to the time of his death in 1853. Catherine James, David Roberts, Ellis Jones, William Jones, Griffith Luke, John Williams (Bryncaled), Mrs. Griffith, the wife of a leading solicitor; Jane Ellis, who became the wife of the Rev. W. Evans; Janet Roberts (Tanyrallt), John Kelly, and others. The Society prospered steadily. When Mr. Bryan visited the town in 1803 and held the first love-feast, he said that when he had been there the previous year they could not rejoice in one Wesleyan in the town, 'but now,' he said, 'we have a hundred and twenty present here to-night.' In 1804 a site was purchased for £30, and the following year Messrs. Owen Davies and Bryan preached at the opening services of the new chapel. In 1806 Pwllheli was made the head of a new Circuit, with Robert Roberts and Hugh Carter as ministers, and in the following three years was included in the Carnarvon Circuit. Since 1824 it has been the head of a Circuit. The other Societies in the Circuit were weak and far apart and the number of local preachers never large, and Pwllheli itself suffered as the result. The Circuit struggled with many difficulties; the people were poor, and few could afford to give much to help the cause. Mrs. Thomas, Mr. and Mrs. Parry, saddler; R. Roberts, 'Shop'; Mr. and Mrs. Griffiths, solicitor; Mr. Thomas, collector, were loyal and zealous workers, who stood by the Pwllheli Society with commendable fidelity. Lewis Roberts and Ellis Jones were local preachers. Evan Richards

entered the ministry in 1841, and died at Merthyr Tydfil, May 13, 1873. Mr. Richards was a zealous Methodist, an evangelical preacher, oftentimes of great power and effect, who filled various offices in the District, and was for several years the financial secretary of the South Wales District, the duties of which he discharged with great zeal and fidelity. The old chapel, erected in 1805, was small and behind the times, and a new chapel was earnestly desired. During the ministry of the Rev. John Evans (A) a site was secured in a more convenient place, and a good chapel erected, which a few years ago was renovated and galleries erected, and it is now a comfortable and commodious sanctuary. There is also to-day a better staff of local preachers in the Circuit, and altogether the work has been more prosperous. William Davies, the ironmonger, Henry Davies his brother, and Hugh Tudor have been active heralds of the gospel of peace through Lleyn for many years; while the names of Ellis Evans, Joseph Roberts, John and Gomer Richards, Owen Williams, David Lewis, Griffith Jones, and David Evans represent much work done for Christ as leaders and officers of the Society. The Pwllheli Society was the home of several intelligent Christian women; the wives of the Revs. William Evans, Evan Edwards (who died at Pwllheli, January 10, 1860), of Robert Jones (2nd), of Charles Nuttall, with others, are affectionately remembered as diligent workers and exemplary Christians. Griffith Jones, father of the wife of the Rev Charles Nuttall, was a zealous local preacher for many years.

Aberdaron is a small village on the extreme western point of the county of Carnarvon, near the mouth of the Daron—the ‘thunderer’ or ‘noisy river’—the nearest point to Bardsey Island. In 1802 Messrs. Bryan and John Maurice visited this place, and were kindly received by the family of Hendre farmhouse. Mr. Maurice preached near the parish church. A second time he came, and ere long Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) visited the locality and formed a Wesleyan Methodist Society

there. The first group of members were William Lewis, Gwrthirian, and his wife; Richard Williams, Marchellyn; Hannah Jones, Gyll-y-felin; John Williams, Bryncaled. William Lewis was the first class-leader, and John Williams, who afterwards removed to Carnarvon, became a popular local preacher. In 1804 a small chapel was erected, known as the Bryncaled Chapel. Some time after this Mr. David Hughes identified himself with the Wesleyans, and was a very acceptable local preacher; he afterwards removed to America. The erection of the chapel was followed by considerable prosperity. It required a great deal of real courage to become a Wesleyan in any part of Lleyn in those days. William Rowlands had been in the employ of R. Hughes, Tyn-y-clawdd, Tregarth, an intelligent Wesleyan, who lent the young Calvinist from Lleyn the Eurgrawn and other books. This led him to study the doctrines in dispute. He also read Samuel Davies's (1st) great sermon on the Atonement, the works of Fletcher, Wesley, and Owen Davies, and in the end became fully convinced as to the scriptural authority for the Arminian doctrines. When Rowlands returned to Lleyn his views were widely known, and in a short time he was scorned and ridiculed by old and young. He came to reside at Aberdaron, and soon became intimately acquainted with David Hughes, whose counsels and conversation he highly appreciated. William Rowlands was still a member among the Calvinistic Methodists, and being brought before the Society for his heterodoxy, he, before all, defended 'conditional preservation of the saints in grace, that Christ had died for all,' etc. After this he was told to leave the Society if he entertained such views, and the young man of eighteen went out and shortly after this identified himself with the Wesleyans. When his father heard of this incident, he walked ten miles to see his son, admonished him for the course he had taken in accepting such erroneous doctrines as Arminianism, and told him that he had made as much talk

about himself as if he had murdered somebody. But young Rowlands felt a firm conviction of right, and, pressed by his friend David Hughes, soon began to preach, and was in great demand far and wide. In 1829 he became a travelling preacher; he died at Oswestry, March 21, 1865, aged sixty-three. He was never surpassed in diligence, zeal, and untiring activity, and will long be remembered for his devotion to the Temperance movement, his defence of Wesleyan Methodism in the pulpit and through the press, and as an eminent preacher of the gospel, as an editor and an author. His *Cambrian Bibliography*, the great literary production of his life, is a standard work, and gives him a first position as an antiquary. His fame will live with the Welsh language, and his industry and character continue to be an impetus to young Methodists for generations. He was impulsive, enthusiastic, but transparently honest. The Aberdaron Society may well feel proud of the fact that Gwilym Lleyn was led to identify himself with Wesleyan Methodism in that village.

The removal of several of the leading families to other places enfeebled this Society, but it drew out the zeal of the women connected with it, who like the women at the Cross were faithful and active in weakness and storm. The agitation of 1830, referred to elsewhere, affected this Society for a time. The storms passed away, and again they began to lift up their heads, and in 1858 a site was secured, and shortly afterwards a new chapel was erected. David Williams, John Evans, William Jones, William Edwards, Humphrey Hughes, and Griffith Jones were the trustees. Thomas Williams, who resided on the Bardsey Island, and lost his life while crossing to land in 1822, was a zealous Wesleyan. David Williams, Humphrey Hughes, and John Evans became class-leaders; the latter with Griffith Jones were local preachers. Griffith Jones entered the ministry in 1857, and after thirty-four years of efficient service in several

of the leading Circuits in the North Wales District, in consequence of failing health, became supernumerary in 1891—a powerful preacher, greatly beloved by all who knew him.

In 1803 Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) preached standing on a chair near the door of Sarnfawr public-house, Cochymoel, in the parish of Penygroes. After the service was over William Jones, Cochymoel, said, ‘This people shall be my people; I have been waiting for them for years.’ He became a member and a class-leader, and his house a hospitable home for all Wesleyan preachers who travelled that way. A thatched roof cottage near by was taken, and here services were held for about a year, when a new chapel was erected and opened for divine worship, November 12, 1804, by Messrs. Jones (Bathafarn) and J. Maurice, and unlike most chapels in those days it was dedicated to the worship of God free from debt. This was largely due to the energy and skill of the leader above mentioned. Several families joined the new sect, and the church continued to prosper. In 1826 the chapel was enlarged, but the agitation of 1830 greatly hindered the work of God in this place. The chapel was closed for years to the Wesleyan body, but in 1844 it was again restored, and ever since has been loyally worked, though the effects of that unfortunate agitation will long be felt. The chapel was renovated in 1865, and again in 1885, and is now in a good condition, and the prospects of the Society are brighter than they have been for years.

Mr. John Hughes, on his first visit to Lleyn, preached at Nevyn in the open air, and although he was not very favourably impressed by his reception, was there a second time before long. William Jones of Llanelidan, who with John Hughes were appointed the first ministers to Carnarvon, visited Nevyn and other places in Lleyn. Mr. Bryan, Jones (Bathafarn), and others also preached in this interesting town. In 1805 a small chapel was erected. One of the first to identify himself with the Wesleyans was John Williams,

Bryncaled, generally known as Shon William. He began to preach in 1803, and was in labours abundant for many years. He received his plan from Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) on a Tuesday, with information that he was expected to preach on the following Sunday at Llanidloes, over eighty miles away from his home; but he most cheerfully discharged the duty. He was made class-leader of the Nevyn Society, and for over seventy years he worked hard as a local preacher, and when an old man of more than ninety summers, used to say that he was sufficiently rewarded for all his labours in the gratification he felt in the useful life of one good man who had been brought to Christ through his instrumentality. Hugh Pritchard (Hen-wr-Ogwen), who afterwards removed to Bethesda, was another of the early converts at Nevyn; and Richard Williams, who was also for many years a class-leader, was probably the first appointed to that office in this Society. His memory is blessed. Robert Williams was led to identify himself with Wesleyan Methodism under peculiar circumstances. He was an intelligent youth, and went to the Calvinistic Methodist chapel to hear a preacher belonging to that denomination from Montgomeryshire. This preacher was a hyper-Calvinist, and described the Wesleyan preachers as wolves in sheep's clothing, while their doctrines he denounced as devilish. The sensitive intellect of young Robert revolted against these hard words, and he decided that he would go and hear these 'wolves in sheep's clothing' for himself. To his great surprise, he found it pleasant to listen to the Wesleyan preachers, who put forward a sounder argument based on the Word of God, and were more respectful in manner than their persecutors. Williams was most favourably impressed; he searched the Scriptures for himself, and felt convinced that the Wesleyans were right. After a time he joined the Society, and when Richard Williams died was made a class-leader, a position which he filled with exceptional success for half a century. Robert Williams

occupied the position of under-pastor ; he rebuked, chastised, advised, exhorted—all with such wisdom, honesty, and fearlessness that his influence over the members was almost unique. Many of the members were seafaring men, and his counsels, prayers, and his strictness as a disciplinarian, were a great blessing to them all the world over. He was wonderfully apt in finding out if any of the members failed to live up to their profession. On one occasion a member had given way to drink, but he came home to Nevyn and stayed in the Society as if nothing had happened. The incident was not known to many, but it was not hidden from the old leader. After a while he began to talk about the importance of being honest, and then naming the transgressor, the crime, the place, and the circumstances, Mr. Williams said there was no place in that Society for that man except on his repentance. The backslider at first tried to deny the charge, but that was impossible, and he finally confessed that he had fallen, and penitently asked to be allowed to come back. In that wide Circuit, with only one minister, who lived seven miles away, it was a great blessing to the Nevyn Society to have such a loyal and powerful class-leader. He was for several years Circuit steward, was really the leading man in the parish, and looked up to by all in connection with every good word and work. He died May 31, 1873, aged eighty-three, during fifty years of which he had been class-leader. Nevyn was one of the places where the agitation of 1830, referred to elsewhere, was the cause of disgraceful scenes and of one of the most painful blots in the history of the reformers in the Principality. The old chapel has been taken down and a new chapel erected, worthy of such good men as we have referred to. The great revival of 1859 was a time of refreshing from the presence of God, and many were added to the Church. In 1879 permission was given by Conference to erect a new chapel, which, with its vestries, is a most convenient and

pleasant place of worship. The Nevyn Society is in a more satisfactory position than at any period hitherto. In connection with it there are many families of whose loyalty to Methodism, zeal and devotion to Christ, we cannot speak too highly.

Criccieth is a town of considerable antiquity, reaching back to remote ages, and with its old castle, excellent shore for boating and bathing, its mountain scenery and pleasant walks, is rapidly becoming an attractive place of resort. There were people from this town at Pwllheli when John Hughes preached his first sermon in Lleyn ; and when Jones (Bathafarn) was in the same town, Robert Evans The Hall, Criccieth, was one of the first to press up to the preacher and assist him in the singing. He and his wife were amongst the first to join the Methodist Society at Criccieth, and they continued faithful unto death, dying within a few hours of each other, and being buried in the same grave, aged eighty-two and seventy-eight respectively, after being members of the Methodist Society forty-two years. Their son Owen became a class-leader, and did good work at Criccieth, Pwllheli, and Portmadoc, where he died October 15, 1864. Hugh Evans was also a class-leader for some years while his health permitted. Robert Owen and his sister, of the Mynydd-du ; Mrs. Ellis, The Gate, and her daughter ; Captain Richard Jones, Porthyraur, and his wife ; Thomas Rowlands, his sister and brothers ; Robert Griffith, Rhoslan ; David Cadwaladr, and others were all honourably connected with this Society. The old chapel was erected in 1809, and was considered a good building. The Society was zealous and prosperous, and, considering the smallness of the population and the number of places of worship within reach, a fairly strong church was established. During the ministry of the Rev. Griffith Hughes and Thomas Jones (3rd) several persons were induced to cast in their lot with the Wesleyans. Amongst others, Mrs. Jannett Owen, who with her husband John Owen

were faithful followers of the lowly Jesus. Mr. Owen was for a period one of the Circuit stewards. David Cadwaladr proved a very efficient class-leader at Criccieth, his death being a great loss to the Society, and indeed to the Circuit. In 1854, to fill the gap, Evan Evans was appointed leader, a position which he occupied with great credit to himself and to Methodism up to the time of his death, September 13, 1888. Mr. Evan Evans became a loyal, diligent, and efficient leader of a Society, and filled with zeal and acceptance every position in the church and Circuit. His family were blessed in their home and work, and made a blessing to others. Mr. R. P. Thomas has also been a diligent officer and worker in this church. In 1869 a new chapel was erected in place of the old one, in connection with which the zeal and activity of the Criccieth Wesleyans were fully and clearly verified.

John Jones, who was the first class-leader at Portmadoc, a position which he afterwards filled with great diligence at Nevyn and Carnarvon, where he died March 22, 1888, aged seventy-eight, was brought in at Criccieth, and met in the class of William Jones. His wife, too, was from the same town, and connected with the same church. John Jones and his wife, after they removed to Beddgelert, fully manifested their zeal for the church of their choice by identifying themselves with the nearest Wesleyan church, which was seven miles distant; and notwithstanding the long journey, they were present at the Portmadoc service every Sunday morning. They would bring their food with them and spend the day actively engaged in Christian work, after which they would walk home to Beddgelert with grateful hearts. The Criccieth Wesleyans were noted for their zeal and devotion to the people of God with whom they were connected. Some of the old people believed in the power of prayer. An interesting incident, reported on the testimony of the Rev. Robert Jones (A), in connection with Owen Evans, to whom

allusion has been previously made, is worth mentioning here. His son, John Evans, was on board the *Jasper* of Pwllheli, a small coaster which ought to have returned the second day. But of her not a word had been heard for three weeks. The inhabitants were greatly excited, and most people felt certain that the boat and crew had been lost. Owen Evans entered his bedroom, where he spent considerable time in close communion with God. After a while he came to his wife, and said to her, ‘ Margaret, don’t weep, your son is safe, and will go into Cardiff with this tide, and the captain’s wife will receive a letter from him on Monday.’ The poor mother could not realize it. ‘ Poor John,’ she said, ‘ has lost his life in the tempestuous weather of the last few days.’ ‘ No,’ said Owen, ‘ he is alive and safe.’ On the following Monday the letter from the captain to his wife came, and the statements were all confirmed. The incident created a great impression in the neighbourhood, more especially as it was well known that Owen Evans was a good man and great in prayer.

Llandwrog, a very interesting village a few miles on the western side of Carnarvon, was visited by the early Methodist preachers, John Hughes, Jones (Bathafarn), John Maurice, William Jones, and others preaching here. In 1802, under the preaching of Jones (Bathafarn), Edward Roberts, then a young man of twenty-three summers, decided to cast in his lot with the Wesleyans. In 1805 he was brought before the quarterly meeting, was put to read a lesson and to preach a sermon before the members of that meeting. He stood the test, and was put on full plan as a local preacher. When this fact was made known, his employer said he must leave at once; he would not have a Wesleyan preacher near him. Edward Roberts was evicted by a Nonconformist, one out of many instances of tyranny to which Wesleyans were subjected. He went to a second place, and was ere long similarly treated. But his fidelity to Methodism was most exemplary, his zeal and energy were untiring. Through ill

and good report, Roberts held on his way stedfast and unmoveable. The little Society was united, but few in number for years. The chapel was built in 1810, during the superintendency of Robert Humphreys, and then the Society commenced to grow. The removal of Mrs. Edwards to Llandwrog was an important event in the history of the Methodist Society. She had been one of a group of godly women connected with the early Wesleyans of Lleyn, and a woman of superior intelligence and of rare piety. The name of Mrs. Edwards (Tyhen) will long live in the memories of the Carnarvon Methodists. The prayer-meeting depended largely upon Edward Roberts and Mrs. Edwards, and for a time they were the only ones who could take part. Robert Jones of Craig Dinas, Llanddeiniolen, who was brought to Methodism at Llandwrog, and was class-leader there for a period, said that when he was a young man living in sin, 'the echoes of Edward Roberts's prayers would often follow him like a storm of thunder and lightning.' Mrs. Edwards's prayers and her beautiful character were the joy of the church, and one of the most encouraging features to preachers and people in connection with the Llandwrog Society. Robert Jones was a class-leader who did good service in this church before he removed to Llanddeiniolen. John Roberts was another good class-leader and singer who went to Llanberis; and Edward Roberts, Gwernafau, a nephew, is a worthy representative of the good old local preacher. Owen and Gwen Jones, Cae-Glas, and others, whose names might be mentioned, are faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Llandwrog Society has long been a living spiritual home in which a goodly number of loyal Methodists have worked, prayed, and praised God together.

The new chapel was opened for divine worship, August 7 and 8, 1874, the Rev. Evan Pugh, John Hugh Evans, and Hugh Hughes taking part in the opening services. There are now a good chapel and a very interesting Society.

Llanddeiniolen (Danielston) is the name of a large parish within a few miles of Carnarvon. When John Maurice preached standing on a wall in Bangor, Thomas and Mary Owen of Tyddyn-Morgan, of the above parish, were present, and were led by the Spirit to give their hearts to the Saviour, and to identify themselves with the new sect. They came to Bangor whenever they heard of a service being held. Mrs. Owen secured a promise of a visit from one of the preachers to her home, and about All-Hallows Tide 1803, Mr. John Hughes preached at Tyddyn-Morgan to a large company who had come to see and hear a Wesleyan preacher. Many of the people were afraid to draw very near to the house, and looked upon the preacher with as much dread as if he were a leper. The service, however, left a deep impression upon many present, and other meetings were held and welcomed by the people. The Society was formed on Easter Monday 1804. Five decided to become Wesleyans, including Thomas Owen and his wife, the publican and his son and daughter. The son, whose name was William Jones, sexton of the parish church, was made a class-leader, and the public-house harper was converted. The meetings were held for a time at Tyddyn-Morgan, then at a farmhouse called the Fachell. The chapel, called Zion, was erected in 1818, and dedicated on November 14 and 15 of that year, the Revs. Robert Humphreys, Richard Bonner, David Evans (1st), and Richard Jones preaching on that occasion. The congregations were so large that services were held simultaneously in the chapel and in the open air. The trustees were Robert Jones, Erwfforch ; Griffith Roberts, Tyddyn-y-felin ; William Morris, Tanydderwen ; and Hugh Williams, Cae-Cwmioig. Several others joined the Society ; amongst others, Ellen Hughes, the wife of William Jones, the leader ; Hannah Jones, John Pritchard, Llysygwynt (who became a class-leader, and afterwards removed to Carnarvon, where he rendered good service in the same capacity) ; Gaynor Pritchard, who was a

sweet singer ; Catherine Jones and Elizabeth Davies, Gwyndy ; John Owen, and Michael Jones. A most notable character was Jane Williams, The Bryn, known as ‘Sian Seion.’ She was converted under the preaching of Mr. Bryan, some time near the end of 1806 or the beginning of 1807. Her change was so real, her consciousness of peace so clear, and her love to the Saviour so ardent, that she never hesitated to bear her testimony. Under the preaching of the Word she was so wrought upon that she would cry out and shout her ‘Diolch !’ ‘Bendigedig !’ ‘Gogoniant !’ (‘Thank Him !’ ‘Blessed be God !’ ‘Glory !’), frequently to the annoyance of preachers and hearers. She would sometimes go before the preacher in quoting Scripture. Many very interesting incidents happened in connection with ‘Sian Seion.’ One will suffice. She was the nearest approach to what was described as Welsh Jumpers ever connected with Wesleyan Methodism in Wales. Ministers and leaders had often exhorted and persuaded her not to shout so much at the services, but all in vain. She was not in affluent circumstances, although she kept a cow or two. Mr. Preece, Carnarvon, a man of a generous nature, saw Jane Williams in the town with a pair of boots on her feet that were really of little value. Mr. Preece said to her in a very sympathetic manner that he would be glad to give her a pair of boots ; then he added, ‘But you must not shout so much the next time I come to preach at “Seion.”’ ‘Thank you very much, sir, thank you,’ said the good old lady. The next time Mr. Preece went to Zion to preach his text was, ‘Behold the Lamb of God,’ and the preacher was having a good time, and poor old Jane was very uneasy. She began to think that by taking the boots she had pledged herself not to praise her Saviour, and the thought was a great pain to her. After a while she, not being able to contain herself any longer, slipped off her boots and threw them towards the preacher, and shouted, ‘The boots for Mr. Preece, and Christ for me. Yes, yes, blessed be His name for ever

and ever!' She felt like a bird set free from its cage, her soul was on fire, and there was no sham about her. She lived to praise her God, and, although a great sufferer, continued to praise Him while she had breath. Mr. Owen Thomas, son of the Tyddyn-Morgan family, became a local preacher, entered the ministry for a few years, then retired, taking his place as a local preacher and class-leader, and filling other offices in the church, the duties of which he discharged with diligence and success. John W. Jones and Erasmus Jones began to preach in Zion, but they went out to America, entered the ministry of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and became eminent ministers of the gospel. They were the sons of William Jones, the first leader, the grandchildren of the publican who joined the Society the night it was first formed in that parish. Robert Davies (Gwyndy), Owen Jones, William Jones, and Robert Griffith for years rendered valuable services as class-leaders.

Portdinorwic is a rapidly increasing little seaport, near which is Moel-y-don, one of the safest ferries over the Menai; the scene of victory by Llewellyn over Edward I. in 1282, and the ferry that Mr. Wesley found after considerable wandering through the snow when on his way to Ireland. It is nearly midway between Bangor and Carnarvon. The Wesleyan Society is so closely allied with Zion, Llanddeiniolen, that it is difficult to refer to the one without the other. The family of Tyddyn-Morgan was the first to welcome Mr. John Hughes to the neighbourhood. It is probable that Thomas Owen was for a time the class-leader of the Portdinorwic Society, and his son Ellis and his family have been so long and honourably connected with the Wesleyan cause in this place that the development of the one has been true of the other. Ellis Thomas, Refail, 'Aberpwll,' as he has been known, and his large and influential family held an honourable place in the Circuit and District. The old home is described as one of exceptional loveliness. The family was endowed with good

singers, talents which they consecrated to the service of Christ, and the house was the resting-place of preachers. The Wesleyan chapel, called Elim, was their second home. One of the daughters married Mr. Buckingham, and her name is widely known and highly respected. Another daughter married Captain Edward Williams, who for many years held the position of Circuit steward of the Carnarvon Circuit. A third married Captain Griffith Williams, and a fourth Captain Robert Williams. The old chapel was enlarged and opened in May 1865. The Society with such good Methodists continued to grow, and enlarged accommodation was required. During the ministry of the Rev. Robert Jones (B), the present chairman of the North Wales District, who resided at Port-dinorwic, a new chapel was erected and opened for divine worship, October 15, 16, and 17, 1877. This chapel is large as compared with the old one, and there is a good Methodist Society there at the present time.

The Llanrug Chapel was erected in 1820, during the ministry of the Rev. Hugh Hughes, and in 1877 the District meeting and Conference sanctioned the erection of a new, larger, and better chapel. The population is scattered, the Calvinistic Methodists have taken a firm hold in this part of the county, and Wesleyan Methodism has not a very large following. There are, however, several chapels in the neighbourhood. In addition to those mentioned, Penisar-wain, Ebenezer, Llanberis are within a comparatively short distance of each other. Wesleyan Methodism has grown some stalwart Methodists in this part of the county. Henry Pritchard, known as Hari Pritchard (Hermon), was a remarkable man. The four brothers are well known Wesleyan class-leaders. John was at Bangor, William at Coedy-parc, Pierce at Cororion, and Henry at Llanrug. They were stalwart men, although very unlike each other. Henry delighted in the doctrines of Methodism, was a powerful debater, always able to hold his own. He was a great admirer of Dr. Adam

Clarke's Commentary, which he studied with an intelligent grasp, powerful in prayer, tender and sympathetic, firm in discipline, and most exemplary in character, and was looked up to by all who knew him as a leader of the religious life of the community. He died July 7, 1869, aged seventy-seven.

The Ebenezer Society was commenced in the house of Mr. Hugh Owen, father of the Rev. Hugh Owen, a highly respected minister in the North Wales District. Hugh Owen was the first class-leader and father of the cause in that village. He was an intelligent, faithful man of God, and his influence upon the Society was like that of a wise, loving father over his own family. At his death, which was a great loss to Methodism in that locality, Thomas Hughes became leader, a position which he too has occupied with great advantage to the work of God. John Roberts, Maengwyn, and his family have zealously and consistently supported this Society for many years. There is at present at Ebenezer much promise of future prosperity. The Llanberis Chapel was erected largely through the instrumentality of the Rev. T. J. Humphreys and Mr. Ingham. The first chapel at Llanbedrog was erected in 1815.

In 1833, on the 9th and 10th of July, a new chapel was opened for divine worship, the Revs. John Jones, Griffith Hughes, Robert Williams, and Edmund Evans taking part. The services were made a great blessing to Methodism throughout the Circuit. The Wesleyans were now taking heart, and renewing their strength after the painful agitation which had done so much to destroy the spiritual life of the churches in this county.

Small chapels were also erected at Llanarmon, Rhiw, and Carmel, in Lleyn, and Rhostryfan, Penygroes, and Talysarn, within the Carnarvon Circuit. In 1876 the Conference sanctioned the erection of new chapels at Rhostryfan and Penygroes, both good and substantial buildings, and the Wesleyan Societies are more than holding their own. The

Rev. T. O. Jones, who entered the ministry in 1881, has won a good position as author and preacher, and who, if spared to the Church, is likely to accomplish much good, was brought up in Rhostryfan Society. His parents, Owen and Catherine Jones, were devout Christians, and several of their children have rendered good service, being trained for Christian work from their cradles.

The county of Carnarvon has been a good training ground for Methodist preachers. In addition to those referred to in connection with the various Societies, Hugh Hughes, the grandfather of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, and Griffith Hughes, his brother, were born at Llanor, near Pwllheli; David Jones, who entered the ministry in 1807, and died 1830—a most effective preacher—was a native of Beddgelert; and if these men were not led to Methodism in their native place, they returned to labour with marked success in the county which gave them birth. Joseph Owen, who is the respected superintendent of an important Circuit, came from Feinheli. Edward Jones (c), who entered the ministry in 1877, went out from Pwllheli; and Thomas Wynne Jones, well known in the English and Welsh work, went out from Bethesda. Wesleyan Methodism has more than justified its existence in this county. In the strength, activity, and prosperity of the Calvinistic Methodist body in Carnarvonshire all large-hearted Christians will rejoice, and that the more because if the old Calvinistic doctrine is not absolutely dead, it is rarely heard from the lips of their intelligent preachers. A free, full, and present salvation is proclaimed from almost every pulpit, unity and brotherly love are growing, and the union of hearts in Christ Jesus is becoming a greater reality. The Churches are beginning to realize more fully than ever that whatever may be our doctrinal differences, as Virgil said, ‘We share one common danger and one safety’; that all Christians have a common tie, and are connected by a higher relationship than either denomination or doctrine—

that of life in Christ. Christians are not to-day less zealous in support of their own Church or denomination than they were a generation ago. No one wishes them to show less zeal, but they are better able to realize that believing without doing good is a dead faith. ‘Love, which is the essence of God,’ says Emerson, ‘is not for levity, but for the total worth of man.’ As the various Churches come nearer each other, and look each other in the face, and know each other better, they are realizing, and will more fully realize, the deeper consciousness of love, their thoughts and souls will become enlarged, and the divine power will take a broader and firmer hold of humanity.



REV^E ROBERT JONES, JR.

Engraved by W. H. BAILEY, of Boston. (See THE NEW ENGLANDER.)

CHAPTER XXII.

METHODISM IN MERIONETH.

The First Wesleyan in the County—First Society—Corwen—The Bonwm Family—John Jones—First Preaching-Place—New Chapel—Jones, London House—Gwyddelwern—Cerrig-y-Druidion—David Jones, Cefnbritth—Dolgelly—Mr. Wesley's Visits—The Old Chapel—The *Eurygrawn*—Rowland Hughes—Bontddu—Jones, Bryntirion—Barmouth—Persecution—New Chapel—Dyffryn—E. Thomas, Tyddyn-du—Jones, Llwyngryfri—Llwyngwril—Llanegryn—Edward Anwyl—Towyn—Agitation—Aberdyfi—David Lloyd—Pennal—Humphrey Jones—Brynerug—Ellis Evans—Robert Jones (b)—Dinas Mawddwy—Wesley's Visit—David Rogers on the Mountain—New Chapel—Bryncoch—Harlech—John Davies's Family—Faith Healing—J. L. Richards—Talysarnau—Edmund Evans—Ffestiniog—Trawsfynydd—Blaenau—Portmadoc.

MR. FOULKES, who in the beginning of the present century had gone to reside at Machynlleth, was probably the first Wesleyan Methodist in the county of Merioneth. The rules of the Methodist Societies had been published at Bala by John Rowland, probably under the direction and instruction of Mr. Foulkes, as early as 1761. Mr. Wesley had passed through the county more than once, but so far as is known there were but few of its residents interested in Wesleyan Methodism. Thomas Roberts of Bonwm, Corwen, probably was a member of the little Society which met at the Carrier's Loft, Ruthin, prior to the coming to Wales of the Conference missionaries. Mr. Owen Davies visited Corwen on his way to Llangollen, but no reference is made to his preaching there on that occasion. Shortly after, Mr. John Hughes went to Corwen, was kindly received by the Bonwm family, preached to a large congregation, and was encouraged in

the work. There were three sons and three daughters in this family, and each became eminent for piety and zealous in devotion to the Methodist Church. Mr. Bryan preached in the yard of the Queen's Inn during the 'Wakes,' and the young Methodist preacher drew many of the people from their games to hear the Word of God, and eventually several yielded to the strivings of the Spirit. Mr. Bryan was encouraged to visit the place a second time, which he did on the 25th August the same year. It was on this occasion that John Jones, who was shortly afterwards appointed the first class-leader, was brought to yield his heart to Christ. John Jones soon began to preach, and entered the ministry in 1802. He was the father of the Revs. Hugh Jones (A) and T. R. Jones, so well known and highly respected in the English work. Mr. John Jones was the first of the Methodist converts who entered the ministry after the establishment of the Welsh mission. Edward Jones also identified himself with the Methodists at Corwen. In 1803 Thomas Roberts, Bonwm, became a travelling preacher, but his health failed him, and he was obliged to retire from the ministry. His health somewhat improved, and he assisted in the translation of Dr. Coke's Commentary, and otherwise rendered good service up to his death in 1856. His brother Robert was called out to supply his place, and was appointed the editor of the *Eurgrawn* the first year of its publication, in itself sufficient evidence of the high estimation in which he was held by his brethren. Mr. Owen Davies used to say that Robert Roberts was great in three things—in body, gift of speech, and godliness. In 1804 Edward Jones, Cornelrhedyn, entered the ministry. He died and was interred at Mold in 1838. Surely a church which was able to send four such men to the ranks of the ministry in three years was favoured from on high. About the same time others joined the Society, including Edward Williams, Tan-y-gob, Hugh Hughes, and Richard Vaughan (who

honoured the ranks of the local preachers), David Vaughan (who became a class-leader), and William Jones, Plas-yn-Bonwm, who for years was a zealous supporter of the Corwen Society. Richard Jones, father of the first leader, had a small room made as chapel-like as possible, which at the time was a great convenience, but as the friends remained satisfied with it for so many years, it was a hindrance to the development of the work. In 1838 a new chapel was erected, and dedicated to the worship of God on the 5th September, the Rev. William Rowlands, Henry Wilcox, John Jones, John Owen (Gyffin), H. Jones, and Edward Lloyd (Llanfyllin) taking part in the services. The new chapel was the beginning of a period of prosperity. In 1846 a violent storm was experienced in the Dyfrdwy Valley, the chapel was filled with water six feet deep, and great damage was done to the property, a disaster which added considerably to the debt, and for years the friends were crushed with heavy burdens. Other Circuits, however, came to their help, and the difficulties were eventually overcome. Richard Jones (1st) and Richard Jones (2nd) were local preachers at Corwen, and rendered considerable assistance. The removal of Mrs. Jones to Bryntirion was an interesting event. Mr. John Jones, the son (known as Jones, London House), became one of the most devoted and useful members in connection with the Society. He had been Circuit steward at an early age; he was class-leader, local preacher, and in all these offices he put conscience, head, and heart into his work, which was more highly appreciated because he made everything very real. He died at the early age of forty-seven, June 6, 1874. He was vice-chairman of the School Board, and held other public positions, and his loss was felt by the town and neighbourhood. A man profoundly loved had fallen asleep in the Lord, and looking at the loss from a narrow human standpoint, many people thought that Heaven was in a hurry to take away so early one that was so useful

here. Richard Evans was a very reliable and active class-leader at Corwen for years. William Williams (Northyn), who began to preach at Llwyngwrl, an eminent musician, has long been actively assisting in various ways in connection with Methodism in this town. He has published a good collection of old Methodist tunes, many of which are equal to any in the language, and through the *Eurgrawn* and *Winllan* several original productions of considerable merit. There is now a new chapel at Corwen, the town has developed gradually, and the prospects of the future are brightening. In 1863 it was made the head of a Circuit, the Rev. John Evans (A) being the superintendent. Many of the Corwen friends were strongly opposed to the division, and were of opinion that to have remained united with Ruthin would have been better. Single stations seldom thrive in Methodism. It is, however, encouraging to find that Corwen has more than held its own.

Gwyddelwern, to which the English name Bushland is given, is on the way from Ruthin to Bala. Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) was the first Methodist preacher to visit this village in 1801, prior to his entering the ministry. The service was held in the Crown Inn. The son of Bathafarn had been the topic of conversation all over the district, and a crowd, including several of the young Wesleyans from Corwen, assembled to hear him explain the new religion. The preacher was invited to the Wern Ddu for the night, and the next time Mr. Jones visited Gwyddelwern he formed the Society. Mrs. Jones and her daughter Gwen decided to become members of the Wesleyan body; while Mrs. Davies, Tyn-y-celyn, mother of Mrs. Jones, 'The Shop,' Ruthin; Mr. Jones, Caenog, and his family; H. Jones, The Foel, and his family; D. Jones, Hendre; Jane Jones, Mardy, and others, cast in their lot with the new sect. They held their meetings in various places for a time, and in 1806 built a chapel in which to worship God. Henry Jones, saddler, then a young

man, was appointed the first class-leader. Mr. Philip Jones and his wife lived at Wern Ddu after the death of his father. Miss Gwen became the wife of Mr. J. Williams, Wernuwchaf, and like her brother and mother felt it a privilege to provide a home for the preachers. The younger daughter and her husband, Joseph Davies, kept the old home of Jones (Bathafarn) specially set apart for his successors in the ministry. Mr. John Jones of Caenog and his wife, the daughter of Mr. J. Bowen of Dinbren, Llangollen, like the Wern Ddu family, were amongst the most sincere, loyal, and devoted in their fidelity to Methodism, and particularly to the Methodist preachers. The Society was not numerous but united, and it was able to rejoice in having on its roll several of the best families in the neighbourhood. In 1832 the chapel, which was not large enough to meet the requirements of the congregation, was renovated and enlarged ; the financial District meeting was held there that year, during which it was reopened. The preaching services, at which the Revs. W. Batten, Bonner, Aubrey, S. Davies, and others took part, and the preaching made a deep and lasting impression upon the inhabitants for miles round. Robert Roberts, who began to preach at Gwyddelwern, entered the ministry in 1835, but died the following year. He was a promising preacher, and great hopes were entertained respecting his usefulness, but before the flower fully bloomed it was transplanted to fairer regions above. Thomas Thomas was a popular preacher, and after rendering good service for years in the Principality, emigrated to America, where he was made a great blessing to his countrymen. Thomas Thomas (2nd), John Roberts, and John Williams were eminent local preachers; and class-leaders worthy of the early traditions of the Society were found in the persons of Joseph Davies, T. Evans, and John Roberts. In 1869 the District meeting sanctioned the erection of a new chapel, which is comfortable and commodious ; and remembering the many disadvantages with which village

Societies such as Gwyddelwern have to contend, it speaks much for the Methodists and the power of the grace of God that they more than hold their own in such places as this.

Cerrig-y-Druidion, which means either Warriorstone or Druidstone, is near Ruthin. It is said that near the church, a couple of centuries ago, there was a pile of stones representing the heroism of certain defenders of their country, while it is contended by others that they were the remains of a Druidical temple. It is an isolated village, and one of the highest in the Principality. Mr. Bryan was the first Wesleyan preacher to visit this place. In 1801 he stood in the open air near the White Lion Inn, and his singing drew together a goodly number of the villagers, but before he had proceeded far with the service the clergyman of the parish very excitedly pressed through the crowd, and asked the preacher by whose authority he had come there to preach. ‘Here is my authority,’ said the preacher, lifting up the Bible which he held in his hand. ‘Do you know what this says?’ ‘No,’ was the clergyman’s reply. ‘“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” This is my authority from above,’ added Mr. Bryan; ‘and I have in my pocket another document, which at the close of the service I will show you—my licence to preach—which is my authority from below.’ The fussy clergyman lost his courage, and made his departure, chagrined at his own folly and failure; while the preacher, with the consciousness of his call from God, and a burning zeal for the salvation of souls, delivered his message with great effect. David Jones, Cefnbritth, then a young man on his way to the village in company with a Calvinist, as they drew near the village saw a crowd of people listening intently to a clerical-looking little man. ‘Who is that man?’ he asked his friend. ‘Well, well,’ responded the Calvinist, ‘the Bible tells us that false prophets would come, and here they are; they are come to our country; but, Deio dear, take care of

thy life, and don't go near them.' David Jones had gone too near to the preacher to turn away, and was near enough to hear the preacher read out his text, 'As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.' The young man's attention was arrested, and he was drawn up to the preacher's side almost without knowing it, and at the close of the service he invited Mr. Bryan to go with him to Cefnbritth, about a mile and a half from the village, an invitation which the preacher accepted. The young man was so impressed with the Methodist preacher that he decided to cast in his lot with these so-called 'false prophets.' There was a vacant cottage at Cefnbritth which he rented in which to hold services. David Jones soon began to preach, the intelligence of which spread like wildfire throughout the neighbourhood; and greatly to the annoyance of many of the religionists of the locality, his preaching attracted the people in large numbers. The prosperity of the Wesleyan services was a source of great pain to the good people of other denominations, who, after failing to prevent their prosperity by calling them 'false prophets,' and giving coloured descriptions of their doctrines, and trying to persecute and ridicule them, decided to take the matter to the throne of the heavenly grace and pray them down. The prayers of this meeting were very amusing, to say the least. One asked the Lord to keep them from the people who believed in the 'power of man.' 'Yes, yes, keep us from Deio Cefnbritth,' said another, which drew out a volley of hearty responses. But the Wesleyans only became more diligent and zealous. David Jones was called to the ministry, the strain of which, however, was more than his health would permit; hence he had to retire, but returned to Cefnbritth, and continued an active local preacher for many years. During his absence the meetings were taken to Cernioge, where a chapel was erected. Cerrig-y-Druidion was taken up in 1836, and Mr. David Jones commenced to hold services in the house of R. Edwards,

a joiner, who with his wife joined the Society, as did Hugh, Evan, and Mary Davies, the End House ; Ellis Jones, Edward Roberts and his wife. Edward Thomas and his son were good Wesleyans from Chester, and together with Ellis Edwards, saddler, Dolgelly, who had come to reside at Cerrig-y-Druidion, were of great service in the development of the work at the new place. Edwards, who some time afterwards died at Bala, had been a local preacher at Dolgelly. In 1840 a chapel was erected, at the opening of which the Revs. Rowland Hughes, Meth Thomas, David Gravel, and William Owen were the preachers. John Jones, Llechwedd-llyfn ; R. Roberts, Bryndu ; T. Owen, Allwydbrys ; R. Jones, Tyddyn ; H. Jones, Fforddfawr ; E. Jones, Egrwydd ; and Edward Hughes, Taidraw, became the trustees. David Jones was the class-leader until he removed to Cefnmawr to reside. Edward Edwards was also a class-leader. The night before he died he had his class in his house, and although feeble in body endeavoured to get on his knees in his bed, where he prayed for each member of his class with marvellous power. The dawn of the eternal day was opening, the celestial light already shining upon his soul, and the next morning he passed through the palace gate into the presence of the King. John Roberts, Tynrhed, was then appointed class-leader. R. Griffith was another excellent class-leader in this church. David Jones, like his father of Cefnbrit, became local preacher and class-leader. Edward Roberts also filled with great credit that important office. The Rev. David Jones (Druisyn), one of the crown bards of Wales and an able minister of the gospel, is the grandson of David Jones, Cefnbrit — the father, son, and grandson were faithful Wesleyan preachers. William Jones and John Thomas, who removed to Liverpool, and R. Roberts, who removed to London, were able local preachers, and other good workers brought up in this church have earned a good name and received their reward.

Dolgelly (the name probably means Hazeldale or Grovedale, corresponding with the beautiful groves by which it is environed) is the centre of scenery almost endless in variety and interest. To the north lies Moel Orthrum and the Precipice Walk, commanding charming views. To the east the Torrent Walk, and the road which leads to the old haunts of the Red Banditti of Mawddwy (concerning which there are traditions in plenty), and the Wnion, wild careering through deep glens and over rocks, with its rampart-like ridges which give it an appearance of strength as it towers above the picturesque valley. The valley of the Maw from Dolgelly to Barmouth is varied indeed, a land of rocky precipices, of torrents, of forest-clad hills, of endless glens, and, most notable of all, a wealth of colour with which few places in Europe can vie. Behind the irregularly built town stands Cader Idris, like a mighty monarch surrounded by an army of giants carefully watching sea and land, even as far as South Wales. Mr. Wesley visited Dolgelly, March 23, 1750, on his way to Ireland, and was kindly entertained by Mr. John Lewis. No reference is made to his preaching there, although Mr. Wesley says, 'John Lewis and all his house gladly joined with us in prayer, and all we spoke to appeared willing to hear and to receive the truth in love.' It is evident if a formal service was not held that the gospel was preached to a few people willing to hear and to receive the truth. Mr. Wesley, who with his companion, Christopher Hopper, crossed the mountain to Tany-bwlch through incessant rain, says that it was with great difficulty that he was not borne over the mare's head, the wind being ready to carry them away. In 1802 Messrs. Owen Davies and John Hughes visited Dolgelly, and taking their stand near the market-place, Mr. Hughes preached with power and effect on the love of God. On November 2, 1804, Messrs. Jones (Bathafarn) and William Parry (Llandegai), returning from Aberystwyth, took their stand near Plas-Isaf, and

preached to a good company of people, while Mr. John Maurice and Griffith Owen also visited the town. The third time Mr. Jones came to Dolgelly he preached in the house of Howell Jones on the other side of the river near the great bridge, where services were regularly held for some time. A vacant cottage called Fronheulog was then taken and opened by Mr. John Jones, Corwen. The next time Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) preached at Fronheulog he invited all who wished to identify themselves with the Methodists to remain behind; all went out, and the preacher was alone. But very soon the people came back in such large numbers that the preacher asked them if they were serious. He soon found they were. Fifty-two joined the Society that night, and most of them continued faithful unto death. Amongst others who decided to cast in their lot with the new sect that night were Griffith Pugh, Humphrey Jones, Jane Williams, Anne Hughes, Jane Griffith, and Elizabeth Owen. In 1806 Dolgelly was made the head of a new Circuit, and William Jones and Robert Humphreys were appointed the first ministers. A site was procured upon which to build a chapel and a minister's house. The opening of the new place of worship was followed by great prosperity. In 1809 the first number of the *Eurgrawn* was published in Dolgelly, and for years the town was the literary centre of the Wesleyan Church in Wales. The District meeting was held there in 1812, in connection with which there was a great deal of preaching, and it is difficult to estimate the number of people who heard the gospel during that series of meetings. The Society prospered, a good congregation attended the chapel, and the Methodist interest in the town was considered satisfactory. One thing, however, which was not looked in the face, and dealt with in the best manner, was the chapel debt, though, as references elsewhere show, Dolgelly was not alone in this neglect. Many Societies seemed to think that to pay the interest on the debt sufficed, and consequently

when misfortune befell them they were involved in difficulties. This was true with regard to the Dolgelly Methodists. They had a number of leading tradesmen connected with the Society, but allowed the debt to remain on the property, paying the interest only. When the Rev. Lot Hughes was stationed in this town in 1826, he found a debt on the property of £1100, and the people able to assist had removed elsewhere, were dead, or in altered circumstances, and Mr. John Jones (Arthog) was the only one in a position and willing to bear the burden. Mr. Hughes in various ways collected £250, and secured a grant of £130, and the debt was reduced by £380. This reduction was a great relief. The remaining debt was allowed to rest until 1839, when Mr. Lot Hughes was appointed to Dolgelly the second time. During his second superintendency, in various ways £400 was raised, and a grant of £200 was given, and £600 was paid off. On the first occasion Mr. Hughes had as his colleague Mr. Aubrey, whose popularity as a preacher, loyalty as a colleague, and personal assistance, contributed largely towards the success of the effort, as did the Rev. Henry Wilcox in connection with the second effort. The reduction of the debt was followed by a period of prosperity, and a large increase of members.

One of the early converts in connection with this Society was Thomas Thomas, who in 1808 became a travelling preacher. He was an able preacher, his matter substantial, and at times when he was thoroughly aroused the hoarseness of voice which troubled him disappeared, and his power over large congregations was marvellous. He died at Barmouth, April 16, 1846, aged sixty-one. Morgan Griffith was another of the Dolgelly men, who entered the ministry in 1811, and died at Aberayron, August 6, 1868, aged eighty. Rowland Hughes, who had been brought up with the Calvinistic Methodists, but who became one of the princes of the Welsh pulpit, identified himself with the Wesleyans at Dolgelly.

Doctrinal discussions were continually agitating the minds of the Welsh people in those days. The five points were taken up *pro* and *con* by old and young. One advantage resulting from this was that the Bible was accepted by all as the only infallible standard of appeal. Rowland Hughes was apprenticed to John Jones, who was a zealous Wesleyan class-leader. The Wesleyan Society was in a very hopeless state at the time—the debt heavy, the chapel nearly empty, and the Circuit steadily declining in membership. Samuel Davies had been the minister stationed at Dolgelly, and if his preaching during his stay in the Circuit did not attract the masses to hear him as in some other Circuits, it was instrumental in leading many to read and study their Bibles—amongst others young Rowland Hughes. In 1827, while Mr. Edmund Evans was preaching, this young man, who had been under religious impressions for some time, decided to cast in his lot with the Wesleyans. Mrs. Lot Hughes was one of the most useful of minister's wives; she took the young man and others by the hand, organized a special meeting for them on a Saturday night and Sunday morning, and a good work of grace resulted. Humphrey Humphreys, who entered the ministry of the Episcopal Church, America, John Jones, and others, who became useful, were not only led to Christ but became eminent workers. Rowland Hughes entered the ministry in 1832, and died at Denbigh on Christmas Day 1861, aged fifty-one. He was a man of great capacity, highly-cultured mind, good memory, an able logician, not without power of imagination, but a master in the art of gathering together and focussing all his powers at the right time and place, and then driving home the truth with such force as to make it irresistible. His popularity was not the result of voice or effort, but the strength of genius consecrated to the service of God. He was the author of *Wesleyan Methodism Defended*, *Divine Providence*. He also translated *Wesley's Notes* and other smaller works. W. H. Richards was another of the

young men of this period who went to America, and entered the Methodist ministry there. The Dolgelly Society has been the training home of a large number of local preachers—Richard Williams, Ellis Edwards, Hugh Price, Richard Jones, Thomas Griffiths, William Lloyd, Richard Cadwaladr, Ellis Roberts, John Jones (1st), John Morris, John Jones (2nd), J. A. Owen, William Williams, Robert Williams, and probably others. The Pughes of Dolgelly have stood nobly by the Wesleyan Church, and Mr. and Mrs. Williams, Brynmair, assisted in connection with the chapel debt, the minister's house, and other matters in a manner which will long be remembered with gratitude. In recent years, Lewis Williams, William Williams, and Samuel Davies have contributed largely in various ways in placing Methodism in a more satisfactory position. Recently a beautiful chapel has been erected, which is perhaps second to none in the District, and Methodism is now more promising than at any period of its history.

In November 1804 Mr. Griffith Hughes preached at Llechfrith, under an oak, several men who afterwards became prominent Wesleyans being present. Amongst them were Owen Jones, who entered the ministry in 1808; William Jones, Bryntirion, and his son Richard. When Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) went to preach at Llechfrith, amongst others who heard him preach and was pleased with the service was William Jones of Bryntirion. He invited the preacher to his house, delighted with his preaching and deeply impressed by his beautiful Christ-like spirit. William Jones was the heir of Tyddyn-du-Llanaber, and had been partially trained for the ministry in the Church of England. He was a good linguist, had mastered Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, but declined to go on to the University, because, as he said, he did not feel called upon to preach the gospel, and with that conviction could not tell a lie and take Holy Orders. So instead he became a joiner. He had been a member of the Calvinistic

Methodist Society for twenty-six years, but for some time many members of that body had been very dissatisfied with him because he appeared too sympathetic with the Congregationalists and other bodies ; and when they heard that he had gone to hear the Wesleyan preacher and taken him to his own house, they were terribly annoyed. Some said that he was a heretic. All agreed that his case must be considered. Mr. Jones was admonished, but without effect. The Association meetings were held at Dolgelly in November 1808, and his case was brought before the assembly. There was a strong feeling in favour of expelling him. An old minister, however, earnestly contended that Mr. Jones should be allowed to remain on the deck as the only hope of his salvation, at the same time trusting that he would see the error of his way. The advice of the old minister ruled the meeting. Next day the celebrated John Elias preached a very powerful discourse on the importance of retaining orthodox views. Mr. Bryan visited the neighbourhood, and William Jones left the deck and joined another crew on board another ship. The following Sunday a Mr. R. Griffith preached a sermon on Isaiah ii. 22, ‘Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils ; for wherein is he to be accounted of ?’ The sermon was chiefly for William Jones ; if not to be accounted of, he was worth a discourse from the preacher who wished to ignore him. William Jones became an active and zealous worker in the new church. In 1810 he erected a Wesleyan chapel on his own land, and it was called Nebo. His wife and family identified themselves with the Wesleyans, and two of his daughters married Wesleyan ministers—Rev. Thomas Thomas and Owen Jones. His son Richard became the printer of the Eurgrawn and other books, and an able local preacher ; one daughter, the wife of Morris Morris, Halfway House, Bontddu ; another, of Lewis E. Jones, a printer in Carnarvon ; and another, the wife of W. J. Roberts, Havad-y-Coed. William Jones died in the peace of

the gospel, surrounded by his family and friends, February 2, 1830. The Society at Bontddu has held its own, and in 1877 the Conference sanctioned the erection of a new chapel in place of the old one. The Rev. John Jones (F), who entered the ministry in 1867, was brought up in this church, as well as many other good Christians, of whom not a few have entered their reward. Mr. Owen Williams, Tyn-y-Cornel, and John Owen, rendered most willing service to Christ and His Church for many years as class-leaders and trustees, and worked in connection with every other branch of work at Pontddu and the Circuit. Owen Williams is still an active local preacher, greatly esteemed for his work's sake.

Barmouth (an Anglicised form of the Welsh name Abermaw — *maw* means ‘broad,’ and refers to the overflowing water; English equivalent, Broadmouth) is built at the foot of a precipitous mountain under which the Maw reaches the sea. Between the mountain and the sea there is room only for one street. The rest of the town is built on the mountain-side, and the inhabitants reach their houses by steep flights of stairs chiefly cut in the rock. The position of Barmouth is picturesque. The bay, sands, sea, river, with rocks, hills, and mountains, and the beautiful valley of the Maw, combine to form one of the most varied groups of Welsh scenery. The neighbourhood is rich in legend and tradition, the telling of which will some day immortalise a great poet.

In 1804 Messrs. Jones (Bathafarn) and W. Parry (Llandegai) visited Barmouth, and were permitted to preach in the house of Humphrey Evan, a tailor, living near the church in a house facing the sea. It was a dark night, and the preachers, after having the consent of the good man to preach in his house, had to go from house to house to invite the people to come and hear them. A good company responded to the invitation. At the close of the service Mrs. Owen, ‘The Shop,’ invited the preachers to her house, and after they had comfortably settled down Mrs. Owen began to tell Mr. Jones about a

dream she had had, in which she saw a stone rolling and finally resting on a plot of land. ‘I shall not be surprised,’ she added, ‘to find a chapel built on that very spot;’ which some time after became a fact. The following November Mr. Griffith Hughes preached at Barmouth, and formed the Society there. Captain Thomas Williams, ‘Post Office,’ and his wife; Mrs. Owen, ‘The Shop’; Mrs. Price, Hendrecoed; Mrs. Mary Owen, Gorsygedol Arms, and her daughter; Mrs. A. Jones, John Humphreys, Catherine Jones, and William Jones were the persons who responded to the invitation and were the first group of Wesleyans at Barmouth. The services were held for some time in the house of Humphrey Evan, and then in an old schoolroom. The opposition the members were subjected to was simply disgraceful. Religious professors would not only denounce them from their chapels, call them ‘heretics,’ ‘wolves in sheep’s clothing,’ ‘false teachers,’ ‘deceivers,’ ‘hellish locusts,’ etc., but would throw stones on the roof of the schoolroom, shout through the keyhole, and frequently make it impossible for the Wesleyans to worship. Three of the women who had identified themselves with this new sect were discussing the situation one day, and one of them said, ‘What after all if these things spoken against us are true—what will become of us?’ As this question was being earnestly discussed they saw Mr. Jones (Bryntirion), then a Calvinistic Methodist, passing, and as he was considered an intelligent man he was invited into the house to give his opinion. ‘The Wesleyans are good people,’ said Mr. Jones; ‘I am making inquiries about them, and will write to London in order to know more about them.’ This reply gave satisfaction. ‘I told you so,’ said Mrs. Owen; ‘when I lived in Liverpool these were my people;’ and so the doubting members were at peace. An old malt-house in a more convenient part of the town was fitted up as a place of worship until the chapel was erected in 1806. Mr. William Jones (Custom House), Mrs. Owen, ‘Shop,’ and her daughter Mrs.

James were the three local friends who became trustees. The women were the first to sign the deed, to attend to the seat-rents, conduct the singing, and hold the services. Mr. Robert Jones (Llwyngiffri) and Edward Thomas (Tyddyn-du, Dyffryn) assisted these devoted women alternate weeks in holding the class-meeting. In 1810 Mr. Ellis Jones came to reside at Barmouth. He was an intelligent, upright, fearless, and exemplary Christian, and under his rigid and faithful leadership the Society prospered. Some time after, Mr. E. Jones, 'Post Office,' identified himself with the Wesleyan Society, and he too became a tower of strength. The chapel was well filled, and the need of a new chapel was for years the greatest obstacle in the way of their growth. In 1855 one of the best sites in the town was secured from Mr. Jones, 'Post Office,' and a good chapel was erected, the trustees of which were Messrs. Ellis Jones, John Jones, Captain E. Edwards, Owen Williams, R. Morgan, Thomas Williams, Robert Williams, Captain O. Griffith, Captain William Owen, and Griffith Evans. The good women who were found faithful in connection with the formation of this Society, after witnessing a good profession, died in the triumph of the gospel, and realized that the Wesleyans were true inheritors of the promises because they were followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. Mrs. Thomas Williams, 'Post Office,' who joined on the first night, was the first to enter the holy place above, July 4, 1810. Mrs. Catherine Jones, mother of Mr. Jones, 'Post Office'; Jannett Jones, wife of Ellis Jones; Mrs. Catherine Owen, 'The Shop,' mother of Dr. Owen, Dolgelly, who acted as chapel steward for many years; Mary Owen, her trusted friend and companion; Mary Lloyd, who died in Liverpool; Mary Roberts, Tyeiddaw Aberdyfi; and Jane Williams,—all these died in the faith of the gospel, and their memory is blessed. Captain Griffith Williams, the father of Mrs. Jones, 'Post Office,' Mrs. L. Williams, Catherine Morgan, and many others were ardent followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. John

Jones, like his father Ellis Jones, became a good class-leader. Mr. and Mrs. Jones, 'Post Office,' were greatly honoured and beloved by all who knew them for their zeal, diligence, and loyalty to the Methodist Church. W. I. Morris, a grandson of Mr. Jones (Bryntirion), and his family have also ably supported the Wesleyans. Mr. Morris has been leader, Circuit steward, indeed has filled every office possible, and is one of the leading laymen in the District, faithfully supporting the small chapels in his own Circuit. Mrs. Morris, who has recently passed within the veil, has fully sustained the early traditions of the Barmouth Methodists, and Mrs. Morgan (Plascanol), too, will be remembered by preachers and people.

Mr. G. H. Jones, who entered the mission field in 1877 and died at Demerara, September 14, 1883, was brought out by this church. In his obituary it is said that during his stay in the Berbice Circuit he worked with a self-sacrificing zeal truly apostolic. As a preacher, he was clear, concise, scriptural, and practical, a conscientious pastor living near to God. Peter J. Roberts, who entered the ministry in 1886, the son of one of the hard, steady, and plodding workers in connection with the Barmouth Society, is one of the promising young men in the Welsh work.

A chapel called Bezer has also been erected in the parish of Llanbedr, which if small has been the happy home of a few faithful and loyal Methodists. The chapel was opened for divine worship June 12, 1828, Messrs. Aubrey, H. Jones, R. Jones (Frongoch), and J. Williams (Machynlleth) taking part in the services. This chapel was in place of an old preaching-place called Rhwng-y-ddwy-bont, which at one time was a promising Society.

In the month of October 1804, Messrs. Jones (Bathafarn) and William Parry (Llandegai), returning from Barmouth, visited and took their stand near the Shop-wen (white shop), which was then occupied by a widow named Anne Williams.

During Mr. Parry's sermon the congregation was comparatively small, but when Mr. Jones began to sing, he was soon surrounded by a large company of people. The Calvinistic Methodists had built a chapel at Dyffryn, and had formed a promising Society. The Antinomian doctrines that were held by the people generally were a great stumbling-block to the more intelligent. Mr. Edward Thomas, afterwards known by the name of his house, The Tyddyn-du, had been under deep impressions, and in his anxiety had gone to see and consult with one of the deacons of the Calvinistic chapel, hoping to receive counsel and instruction. He was told, when the effective call came, that it would be irresistible, and to avoid obedience would be impossible. This reply was to the young man a sad disappointment. For a short time the Wesleyan services were held at the Shop-wen, but David Williams and his wife, who were among the first to identify themselves with the Wesleyans, arranged for the services to be held at their house called Caecwtta. When Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) preached there the following spring, Mr. Robert Jones (Llwyngriffr), who heard him, was so pleased that he invited him to his house, and was deeply impressed with the earnestness, lofty ideal, and beautiful spirit of the Wesleyan preacher. Mr. Robert Jones afterwards read his Bible more carefully than ever, with the view of finding if these new doctrines were true. The more he read, the more deeply was he convinced of his own sin, and that the doctrines preached by the new sect were based on the Word of God. Mr. John Jones of Corwen came to preach at the opening of Harlech Chapel, and on his way he also conducted a service at Barmouth and Dyffryn. Mr. Jones heard him at both places, and at the latter place, Miss C. Edwards, Tyddyn-du, and three others, joined the Wesleyan Society. In less than two months after his conversion he was appointed class-leader, and very soon began to preach, and for twenty-five years was one of the strongest pillars of the

Wesleyan Church in the Principality. When Edward Thomas heard that his friend Jones (Llwyngiffri) had joined the Wesleyans, he was also deeply wrought upon, and when Mr. Griffith Hughes preached at Dyffryn the following autumn, he cast in his lot with the same people. He passed through the greatest agony of soul before he found peace, but the joy which accompanied the blessing was so great that the world to him was really a new creation. He married Miss C. Edwards, also one of the members of the Society; he soon began to preach, and for nearly half a century was a tower of strength in the Circuit. A chapel was erected in 1806, and a Society built up, which has been the home of many good people. The unity of spirit between Robert Jones and Edward Thomas was touching and marvellous. The two men were quite different to each other in their trend of thought, cast of mind, and tastes. One was social, talkative, homely, interesting; the other reserved, of few words, and blunt of speech; yet withal they were like David and Jonathan, so united in work and life, that each one seemed to feel the impossibility of accomplishing anything without the help of the other. Both were powerful in prayer, and the prayer-meetings held by them will be talked about for generations to come in that locality.

Llwyngwril (the English equivalent of which is Braveton, and probably refers to some act of a brave man or men in the bush in the place where the village now stands) was visited by Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) in the summer of 1802. He preached, taking his stand near a barn in the village, the property of Mr. Owen, Garth-Angharad a county magistrate, who had a brother in England, a Methodist class-leader, which fact probably accounted for the early visit to this village. In November 1804 Mr. Griffith Hughes, who preached at several other places on this round, came to Llwyngwril. He was kindly received by Mr. John Williams, the Lower Mill. The mill was stopped, and the preacher

turned the trough into a pulpit, from whence he preached a notable sermon. After the service he invited any who wished to join the Wesleyan Society to remain behind for further instruction. Seven persons responded to the invitation—John Williams and his wife ; William Griffith, Cefnymeusydd ; Lewis Jones, Bodcadvan ; Betti Roberts, Tyddyn-du, and two others. Persecution was practised here in various ways by the same class of people, and attempts were made to take his business away from the Wesleyan miller. At a prayer-meeting, held in a cottage, a man called Rhys, the slater, dared to announce to those present that a Wesleyan preacher would preach at the Felin Isa in a week's time. One of the men made an attempt to prevent the notice, and when Rhys asked him why he was in such bad temper, the man replied, ‘Because the Wesleyans preach the power of man, and that Christ died for all.’ ‘Doesn't the Bible say so ?’ asked Rhys ; but he had scarcely uttered the words when he was collared by two worthy brethren and thrust outside the door. Many other attempts were made to destroy the Wesleyan influence that were unworthy of the name of Christianity, but they naturally failed. John Jones of Pontcadvan and William Pritchard (Pigyrallt) cast in their lot with the followers of John Wesley, Lewis Jones was appointed the first class-leader, and meetings were held for a time in an old malt-house and then taken back again to the mill. A site was offered by Mr. Anthony Morgan, Hendre, a Quaker, who held in high esteem the Wesleyan body. The new chapel was erected and opened for divine worship, January 6, 1812, the Rev. John Jones (Corwen), Lot Hughes, John Jones (2nd), W. Jones, J. S. Jones, and Ellis Evans taking part. Jane Williams, a celebrated singer, although very young, joined the Society about this time, and for years led the singing. This young woman was a housemaid in the service of Dr. Owen, Llwyndu, a very earnest Quaker, and the young woman was so happy in her first love, that she was singing

continually while at her work and while moving to and fro in the house. Her master did not agree with singing, unless inspired by the Holy Ghost, and he used to say so in strong language. The young woman would reply, ‘I will sing a little here; in heaven I will sing more sweet, more loud, and Christ shall be my song.’ For nearly half a century Jane Williams was happy in the service of Christ, and died in the triumph of the gospel. Captain John Jones and his wife opened a shop in the village and at the same time a home for the preachers, and in various ways did all in their power to further the work of God. Lewis Jones was a faithful class-leader for nearly fifty years, and after his death Thomas Rees of Parlle succeeded him. In 1846 an effort was made to pay off the debt of the chapel, Mr. Jones, Tynycoed, a nephew of the old leader, giving £25 out of the money left him by his uncle in his will. Mr. Morgan extended the lease, and Messrs. William Williams (Northyn), William Williams (2nd), Lewis Rees, John Thomas, Richard Williams, and John Williams became the trustees. The chapel was soon filled and a number of young people enlisted. The old Wesleyans have now gone to their reward, but the names of Elizabeth Roberts, Tyddyn-du, who for sixty-two years was an exemplary Christian, Catherine Edward of the Friog, and Catherine Griffith, Cefnmeusydd, will live in the religious life of the place for years to come. The Rev. Richard Williams, who entered the ministry in 1854, and for many years has superintended important Circuits, has been exceptionally successful in paying off chapel debts, and thereby delivering out of bondage a large number of trustees, hails from Llwyngwril. William Williams, too, rendered valuable service as a local preacher. Mr. Lewis Rees has been a faithful steward and great help to this Society for many years. In 1870 the District meeting sanctioned the erection of a new chapel at Llwyngwril. There is now a good chapel, Society, and congregation, and the other sections of the Christian Church work heartily together.

Llanegrynn was the next place visited by Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) and William Parry (Llandegai) on the very successful round to Aberystwyth, previously referred to. Llanegrynn was the home of Hugh Owen, Bronycledar, who had been trained at the University for the ministry of the Church of England, but who decided to devote his time and labour and talents amongst his neighbours. His life was one of self-sacrifice, without seeking the support or approbation of men. Of Mr. Jones's first visit to Llanegrynn little is known. Mr. Griffith Hughes visited the village the same month, and taking his stand near the Tynewydd public-house, delivered his message with considerable effect. Mr. John Thomas, the occupier of Tynewydd, had in a dream on the previous night seen the Day of Judgment, and in the great multitude he saw himself, his father, and a Jane Williams unprepared and condemned, but before they were actually driven away, he saw a door open into a small room, which was full of light, and to his great joy he was allowed to enter in. The next day, while surveying his farm, the dream was ever present to his mind, and he was very solemn. Hearing that a stranger belonging to a new sect was coming to preach in the village, he went to the service, arriving just as the minister in a powerful voice was giving out the words—

‘The day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When heaven and earth shall pass away’—

and then Mr. Hughes read as his text, ‘For the great day of wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?’ The dreamer understood the message as one for himself, and he decided to obey the call. At the close of the service, together with his wife and the Jane Williams he saw in his dream, he expressed a determination to flee from the wrath to come. Tynewydd became the preaching-place as well as the preacher's home after that evening. David Rogers held a very remarkable service on the top of the mountain on a Sunday afternoon, the people gathered to the place from miles

round, and the sermon was accompanied with marvellous power and many conversions. The few disciples were encouraged by frequent additions to their number. In 1808 a chapel was erected, in connection with which Mr. Ellis Evans (Pont Fathew) rendered much service in various ways, and he also became a trustee and chapel steward, John Thomas being the only local trustee. This Society has been one of the most highly honoured in training preachers. Edward Anwyl, who became the chairman of the District, and to whom reference is made elsewhere, was converted under the preaching of Griffith Hughes, and entered the ministry in 1808. Lewis Jones (1st), who was for some time a class-leader, entered the ministry in 1810, and died at Llangollen, November 15, 1830, aged forty-six. Mr. Jones was eminent for his piety, solid and solemn, a plodding and acceptable preacher of the gospel. His death was triumphant. His son, the Rev. J. Spencer Jones, became an eminent minister in the English work. Lewis Williams, who entered the ministry in 1838, and died at Newport, Monday, August 29, 1884, aged seventy-five, was for many years a popular preacher. He was blessed with a voice which for sweetness, variety, and strength was not surpassed, and only in a few instances equalled. He was a sound evangelical preacher, a genial colleague, and a kind-hearted superintendent. He was not without some poetical genius. David Jones (3rd), who entered the ministry in 1848, and died at Brecon, September 12, 1861, aged thirty-eight, was also a very able and promising preacher for the first few years of his ministry. Robert Jones (D), who entered the ministry in 1862, has maintained a most honourable position amongst his brethren as superintendent and an able preacher. All these good men, honoured and beloved, claim Llanegryn Society as their mother-church. Griffith Anwyl, John Jones, Richard and John Williams, brothers of the Rev. Lewis Williams; John and Lewis, brothers of the Rev. David Jones; John Ellis and

H. Griffiths have rendered great services as local preachers. Methodism owes much to its villages. The majority of our ablest and most useful ministers and preachers come from small churches, and often their history is the most interesting. Greater zeal is shown and sacrifice made, accompanied by greater manifestation of the divine presence and blessing, than is often met with in large town Circuits.

The next place visited by Messrs. Jones and Parry was Towyn. About the last day in October 1804 they stood on a stone in the upper end of Maengwyn Street. Mr. Jones's singing attracted considerable attention, and secured for him a better congregation than that obtained by his colleague, who had preached before him. In less than a fortnight Griffith Hughes came to Towyn, continuing his successful round. It is probable that it was on this occasion that the Society was formed. For some time the meetings were held in a room over the stable of Penyrrallt Arms, afterwards in a place called Spy Corner, and later on in a cottage in a new part of the town. The first group of members were Edward Jones, Hugh Edward, Francis Jones, Lewis S. Griffith, and David Sam. Edward Jones and Hugh Edward were the class-leaders, while Francis Jones was the leader of the singing. The Society did not grow very rapidly, and a chapel was not erected till the year 1817. Edward Jones was a very active and successful worker, a man of singular power in prayer. He was also very useful with the Sunday school, giving attention to the young people and forming singing classes, which exercised influence for good over the church. During the superintendency of the Rev. Lot Hughes, with Thomas Aubrey as his colleague, Towyn, like other places in the Dolgelly Circuit, was visited with a revival of the work of God, the chapels were crowded, and many were added to the church. The active workers included Richard Owen, a Christian of influence; Hugh Humphreys, Hendy, who used to hold catechumen classes; John Williams, Robert Davies,

Edward Edwards, Evan Jones, who became a local preacher; William Jones, the smith, who became one of the best congregational singing choir-masters; Griffith Griffiths and William Jones, local preachers, and many others. The days of their prosperity had dawned upon them, but alas! the enemy came and the tares were sown. The agitation of 1831, which did so much injury in the Carnarvonshire Circuits, reached Towyn. Edward Jones, who had been so useful, joined the agitators and endeavoured to take possession of the chapel as was done elsewhere. The Rev. Evan Hughes, the superintendent of the Circuit, succeeded in frustrating their plans and expelled Edward Jones, and others left with him. Edward Jones and his friends formed a Society of reformers, and they had the sympathy of the other Nonconformist bodies in the place. During the reform agitation of 1849 the Towyn case was brought before the public by Mr. William Jones, one of the preachers of the reformers, and the Rev. Evan Hughes was accused of deceiving and leading wilfully astray the trustees of that chapel. The Rev. Richard Pritchard, who was Mr. Hughes's colleague during that agitation, wrote to the *Amersau* (the Welsh *Times*) to defend his old superintendent. Mr. Edward Jones endeavoured to support the charges, but Mr. Pritchard marshalled his witnesses so successfully, that the reformers were compelled to admit that they did not know of the facts until they were so fully explained by Mr. Pritchard.¹ The discussion was dropped, Edward Jones regretted the course he had taken, emigrated to America, where some years after he died at Milwaukee. The Society formed by the reformers, after Edward Jones left the country, soon died out, and a few of the old members returned to their first love. William Jones was now made the class-leader. The effects of this agitation were long felt, but steadily the members of the Wesleyan Society lived it down. During the great revival which began

¹ *Life of Rev. Richard Pritchard*, Eurgrawn 1187, pp. 96, 97.

at Tre'rddol, and to which reference is made in another chapter, Towyn caught the refining fire. The Revs. Isaac Jones and Griffith Jones were the ministers of the Circuit at that time, and under their powerful preaching and wise administration the whole Circuit was greatly blessed, but especially Towyn. The chapel was filled and enlarged, and the church greatly strengthened. A new deed was secured. Messrs. Hugh Humphreys, Hendy ; Edward Evans, Pantyneuadd ; William Jones, smith ; Griffith Jones, Evan Vaughan, and Richard Owen became the trustees. David Humphreys was appointed a class-leader, and John Williams was also a leading member deeply interested in the work. The Towyn Society was also the home of a group of godly women. The name of Mrs. Hughes, Caethle ; Mrs. Owen, Church Street, and her daughter ; Peggi Williams, Betti Rowland, Betti Vaughan, Gwen Williams, and Anne Richards are affectionately cherished. In March 1883 a new chapel was opened on a better site on the main road to the station, which is worthy of the growing attractiveness of this pleasant place of resort. In 1879 Towyn became the head of a Circuit, Richard Morgan (A) being its first superintendent. The chapel was erected during the superintendency of the Rev. W. Evans (A), and opened for divine worship during that of the Rev. Hugh Owen. John Ellis began to preach at Towyn, as did J. O. Parry, who entered the ministry in 1890. In recent years the class-leaders, Lewis Lewis (Faenol), Evan Davies (Bronygan), John Davies (Idris House), have been supported by a goodly number of active, intelligent young men, who take an interest in every branch of work, and the church at Towyn has become an intelligent, vigorous, growing Methodist centre, with its prospects towards the rising sun, and its better days to come.

Aberdyfi was the next place visited by Messrs. Jones (Bathafarn) and Parry (Llandegai) on the memorable round in 1804, to which reference has been frequently made. Mr.

Peters, Raven Inn, gave them permission to preach in an old storehouse which he owned. The doctrine preached attracted attention, and after the service was over several of the hearers came to the inn to inquire further as to what was meant, amongst these being Lewis Pugh, Mary Peters, and Mary Morris. The new doctrine was the one topic of conversation throughout the village for days. On November 8th, the same year, Mr. Griffith Hughes was about to begin to preach on the main road, when a certain woman assumed authority to speak on behalf of Mr. Corbett, and warned the Wesleyan preacher that he must not preach there. ‘You are welcome to my house,’ said one, Anne Angel, and thither proceeded preacher and people. After the service Mr. Hughes was invited to the house of Robert Pritchard, who was, with his son, amongst the first group to join the Wesleyan Society. Hugh Angel, Gwen and Mary Roberts, Elizabeth and Anne Morris, Mary Thomas, John Morris, Margaret Angel, Robert Pritchard, Thomas Jones, and Rowland Roberts shortly after desired to flee from the wrath to come. The services were held at Tan-y-castell, Tan-y-graig, and in other cottages. The chapel was not built till the year 1828, when Lot Hughes and Thomas Aubrey were on the Circuit. The cause, which had been very fluctuating for many years, began to develop in the new chapel, and several good men were raised up who gave stability and character to the work. When Mr. David Lloyd joined the Society at Aberdyfi in 1827, there were only twelve members, but the number began to increase, and it has continued to improve up to the present time. David Lloyd was made steward and class-leader, and he prospered in his circumstances, and heartily devoted his growing influence to the building up of the Methodist Church. His house was for many years the preacher’s home, and his wife and daughter, Mrs. Williams (London House), were equally active and interested in every branch of Methodist work.

David Lloyd died on July 15, 1881, aged seventy-eight. Rowland Rowlands and his family will be long and affectionately remembered. Richard Roberts, the first class-leader, who was a young man of great promise, began to preach, but was cut down in early life and transferred to the sunshine of God's presence. William Rowland and David Davies were active local preachers. William Lloyd, a relative of David Lloyd, was also an able preacher of the gospel; he removed to Brecon Circuit and then to Cardiff, where he died. David Rowlands was another local preacher brought up in this church. Thomas Rees was for some years a local preacher at Aberdyfi. Humphrey Jones and E. L. Rowlands have also rendered valuable service in that honourable position. The Aberdyfi Chapel is now a commodious one, in which there are a good Society, Sunday school, a goodly number of active and intelligent workers, with the second minister stationed there; and if this 'little seaport, romantically situated under the rocks,' is sometimes said to be a 'dead-alive place,' this designation is in no wise true of the Wesleyan Society there. There are a number of active men, powerful in prayer, zealous in every good work; and with a number of good families, there is a future for Methodism in this quiet haven of rest.

Pennal, a small village in the Dyfi Valley, was the next place visited by Messrs. Jones (Bathafarn) and Parry (Llandegai). They had been led to expect that one of the chapels there would be opened to them, but at the last moment the key could not be found. No other place had been asked for, and for a moment they were at their wits' end to know what to do. In their difficulty Mr. Morris, the occupier of Brick House, offered them his house in which to preach. The doctrine was a startling revelation to the people generally, and all sorts of things were said about the new sect. There was, however, a longing desire to hear the preachers again. Pennal was not visited again until June

1805, when Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) preached under the shade of a thorn, Mr. Morris, Brick House, fearing his landlord, could not grant his room as he had done on the previous occasion. The following September, Mr. Jones came to Pennal again, and on this visit formed the Society there. Amongst others who joined the Society were Edward and Robert Lloyd, Gellygraian, and Humphrey Jones, Marchlyn. Richard Jones had offered his house for the preachers, and an old malt-house was secured in which to hold the meetings. The Society continued to grow; it was necessary to find a larger place, and a barn was rented from David Humphreys. The Wesleyans of Pennal were persecuted in various ways, even professing Christians believing they were doing service for their Master by using their influence to prevent the barn being registered as a place of worship. But the magistrate recorded the place, and gave the Wesleyans permission to worship there. In 1809 a site was secured of the Misses Vaughan, Penmaen, and on October 10th of that year the chapel was dedicated, Messrs. W. Batten, Griffith Owen, and Lot Hughes being the preachers. Wesleyan Methodism prospered at Pennal, and for a time it had one of the most active of village Societies. In 1809 Humphrey Jones became a travelling preacher, and laboured with great acceptance in various Circuits up to the time of his death at Llanfyllin in 1838. Edward Lloyd removed to Llanfyllin, where he continued a faithful local preacher and class-leader for many years. Lewis Richards, who was a successful evangelist, went to America; and amongst other notable members of this church were Thomas Jones (3rd), to whom reference is made in another chapter, and who died at Tre'rddol; John Jones, son of Humphrey Jones, who went to America; John Jones (2nd), who died some years ago; Thomas Rees, who afterwards resided at Aberdyfi; David Roberts, who went to Hanley; and David Jones (D), who entered the ministry in 1884, and is one of the ablest of the

younger ministers in the Welsh work. Mention should also be made of Richard Jones (Surnant), a man of deep piety and self-sacrificing devotion to the work, William Roberts, Edward Owen, Owen Vincent, Evan Ellis, all class-leaders at Pennal ; Richard Morris, David Williams, Edward Davies, Evan Evans and his family, who removed to Rhymney, and for many years have been honourably connected with Wesleyan Methodism in that town ; Hugh Jones and John Jones, Pandy ; William Richards, Margaret Roberts, Hugh Davies, and others. The chapel has been altered and improved, and if rather small in size, it has contributed largely to strengthen many a town chapel, and has grown some eminent ministers to supply the pulpits of the large cities. With the migration of so many young people from Pennal, the Day of Judgment only will reveal the good done by this village Society.

When Messrs. Jones (Bathafarn) and William Parry preached at Towyn, one of the crowd that listened so attentively was Ellis Evans, Pont Fathew, who there and then decided that this people should be his people, and identified himself with the first group of members of the Towyn Society. When Griffith Hughes a few days later visited this village, he stood on a chair at the end of a house at Bryncrug, where he preached the free gospel with considerable effect. The Society was probably formed by Jones (Bathafarn) during his second visit to the place, its members being Richard Davies, Daniel Edwards, William Jones, Elizabeth Williams, Margaret Hughes, Margaret Pugh, Anne Owen, Rees Lewis, Joseph Daniel, Isaac Thomas, and a few others whose names are not recorded. Ellis Evans was the class-leader, and he also became one of a band of local preachers in that Circuit who did the work of travelling preachers. The services were held in a cottage called Glan Morfa. In 1821 Mr. Ellis Evans retired from business, but his shop was taken by Mr. David Davies, then a young assistant at Llanidloes. Mr. Davies was a native of Machynlleth, and in London had been con-

nected with Great Queen Street Society, and was deeply attached to the Wesleyan Methodist doctrine and discipline. He brought his zeal and intelligence with him to Bryncrug, and in Mr. David Humphrey, Bryn-Erwast, found a faithful colleague. The cottage was small and unattractive, and they felt the need of a better place of worship, but they were some time before they could see their way clear to undertake the task. In 1830, however, a chapel was erected, Hugh Pugh (Maesypandy), Richard Davies (Cilcemaes), and the two above named becoming the trustees. When the Rev. Lot Hughes was the superintendent of the Circuit in 1839-40, the Society at Bryncrug renewed its strength, began to put on its beautiful garments, and several young people were brought to Christ. Amongst these were the Revs. Robert Jones (B) and Evan Pugh. The chapel was enlarged in 1845, and again improved in 1866. Ellis Evans, who was for many years Circuit steward, took great interest in several of the weaker places in the Circuit, in connection with which he did the work of a pastor. He died in the full assurance of faith, December 10, 1858, aged eighty. His work is frequently spoken of, and his name is more precious than gold. David Humphreys was a zealous class-leader, whose home and horse, energy and money, were all lovingly devoted to the cause of God. He met with an accident, which proved fatal, September 26, 1855. David Davies died of apoplexy June 1, 1867, in the seventieth year of his age. He was only about twenty-two years of age when he associated himself with the Wesleyan Church at Great Queen Street, London, being then on a visit to the Metropolis, and from that time up to the day of his departure, he occupied an important place in the religious life of the Circuit of Dolgelly. As leader, steward of Society and Circuit, he was the embodiment of wisdom and purity, and naturally held in affectionate esteem. His second wife was the daughter of Mr. Rowlands of Talybout, a family still connected with this Society. The Messrs. Hughes, Tynyllwyn;

Richards, Pensarn ; David and Hugh Humphreys, sons of the old leader ; the Edwards, Penygraig ; Richards, Penygraig ; Lewis Lewis, 'Shop,' represent the old families of Bryncrug ; while the names of Daniel Edwards, Edward Jones, John Angel, and Cornelius Jones are still cherished as active prayer leaders. Evan Pugh, who became a travelling preacher in 1846, and died at Rhyl, August 13, 1879, aged fifty-five, was a thoughtful, sweet preacher, a great favourite with the people, and notwithstanding a somewhat frail constitution, preached a great deal in and out of his Circuits ; the present chairman of the North Wales District, editor and book steward, and a member of the legal hundred, Robert Jones (B), highly esteemed for his work's sake ; David A. Richards, who entered the ministry in 1869 ; and L. J. Rowlands, who is a travelling preacher in Australia, were all brought up in the neighbourhood of Bryncrug. The chapel has been renewed and modernised, and is worthy of the past traditions of this very interesting Society.

Dinas Mawddwy was visited by Mr. Wesley himself. On Monday, April 10, 1749, the second day after the marriage of Mr. Charles Wesley, the Apostle of Methodism, after preaching at Llanidloes, and being received with open arms by some people in a village seven miles away, probably Carno, came to Dinas Mawddwy. There is an old tradition that Mr. Wesley spent the night in the Plas (Palace), then the residence of the Myttons, who were from home at the time. It is said that the honest man having charge of the house, to whom Mr. Wesley refers as not being able to converse in English, yet at the same time, desiring to pay him honour, sent for the most learned man in the town, who was an exciseman, to keep him company. The exciseman sent an excuse of being not very well, but withal invited Mr. Wesley to his house. Mr. Wesley returned thanks, and sent him two or three little books. The exciseman returned a very earnest request to Mr. Wesley to call and see him, which he

did. Mr. Wesley writes of his first visit : ‘ I went and found one that wanted a Saviour, and was deeply sensible of his want. I spent some time with him in conversation and prayer, and had reason to hope the seed was sown in good ground.’ What became of the exciseman is not known to us. Richard Davies, who as a young man from Dinas Mawddwy went to Liverpool, identified himself with the English Wesleyans, and after a while was one of the founders of the Welsh Wesleyan Society in that city. In 1806, when stationed at Machynlleth, Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) visited Dinas Mawddwy, and preached in the parlour of the Goat Inn. Mr. Jones’s service was one of great effect, it created such a stir that the doctrine he preached became the one topic of conversation in every house. The Bible was read and sought after, and the common people found passages in the Word of God they had never dreamt of. A fortnight later, Mr. Davies (Africa) preached in a cottage, and when he invited those who wished to become members of the Wesleyan Church to remain behind, to his great satisfaction eighteen responded to the invitation to flee from the wrath to come, and become Wesleyan Methodists. For a time the Society met in the house of John Ellis, and afterwards in the farmhouse called Dolybrawdmaeth, then occupied by Thomas Morgan. The ark was removed again to Penygeulan ; but shortly after, Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) purchased a site upon which to build a new chapel, which was opened for divine worship, September 1808, Messrs. Bryan, Carter, and William Jones (Llanelidan) being the preachers on the occasion. For a short time everything indicated prosperity, but the chapel debt became a source of trouble. The trustees were nearly all living elsewhere ; several of them were ministers, and they were called upon to pay the interest. The matter was brought before the District meeting more than once, and permission given to collect through other Circuits. The struggle was hard and long. In the meantime, they were often the recipients of blessings

from on high. David Rogers preached a marvellous sermon on the top of the mountain, and it is said that thousands of people came to hear it, and many were the slain of the Lord. Returning from a great meeting at Dinas Mawddwy, a company of thirty-eight on their way home to Dolgelly, with their hearts full of joy, held a prayer-meeting on the same spot, and powerful was the divine presence they experienced. They forgot time, toil, and care, and Bwlchoer-ddrws is looked upon by old Methodists as hallowed ground. During the ministry of the Rev. Richard Pritchard the chapel was rebuilt, the new building being a great improvement on the old one. The Revs. J. Bartley, T. Morris, and Dr. William Davies were the preachers at the reopening services. New life pervaded the Society, and the effort was made a blessing. The old class-leaders, who had seen the day of small things and had suffered under misrepresentation and evil report, were gratified to find that their labours had not been in vain in the Lord. Thomas Morgan, Dolybrawdmaeth ; John Jones, Bryngeleu ; William Rowlands ; and Thomas Jones, Bryncelyn, were faithful and true class-leaders for years. David Jones (Parc) was another faithful and strong pillar of the Society. Robert Francis, who had been converted at Pennal, Edward Jones, and Robert Jones, Tynypwll, who, like his father of the Parc, were reliable leaders of classes. When Sir Edmund Buckley bought the Dinas estate, he expressed a wish to extend his park, and to take possession of the Wesleyan chapel with the land attached to it, offering at the same time land in another place, and paying them for the chapel. This change was effected, and a larger, better chapel erected, in the most central and prominent part of the old city, and dedicated to the service of God, April 15 and 16, 1869. The class-leaders of recent years, William Jones (1st), William Jones (2nd), David Lloyd, and Hugh Jones, the agent, have been men of intelligence and zeal ; and the families of the Goat, the Nag's Head, have continued valuable supporters

of the work of God in the Dinas. The names of Eliza Richards, Gaenor Richards, Mrs. Preece, and others, are lovingly remembered by the old people of this Society, in which women have been most efficient workers. The Rev. Evan Evans, who entered the ministry in 1859, John Jones (G) in 1869, and David Richards in 1873, who died March 31, 1892, were brought up in this Society. Mr. Richards was one of the most beautiful as to his character, devoted and successful in his ministry, and his early death was a great loss to the church. Dinas Mawddwy Methodists have reason to be thankful that they have sent out such good men to the Methodist ministry. Mr. David Lloyd, who is a preacher and leader, occupies a sphere of usefulness in his native place, and in his own church, which cannot otherwise than be a joy to himself and the Society. Edmund Evans has long been an active and acceptable preacher in the London Welsh Circuit, and E. Roberts is another local preacher at Dinas Mawddwy with an honourable record for active labours.

During the superintendency of the Rev. Lot Hughes, a small chapel was erected at Bryncoch, near Llanymawddwy. Mr. Humphrey Jones (Pennal) refers to the activity of some of the young members at Dinas Mawddwy, who encouraged him very much when a local preacher. These young converts used to accompany Mr. Jones to Pontcadvan, Garthbeibo, and other places in the Llanfair Circuit, and were probably the originators of the Bryncoch Society. The few Methodists connected with this Society have held on under the many difficulties inseparable from a church so far away from pastoral oversight, but their love and devotion are unmistakably demonstrated in their fidelity to the cause under discouraging circumstances.

When Messrs. Jones (Bathafarn) and Parry (Llandegai) were preaching at Machynlleth in October 1804, Mr. Edward Thomas, Rhognant, was in the town on business, and was drawn to hear the strangers preach. He was so much

impressed by their plain, fearless way of proclaiming the gospel that at the close of the service he pressed up to the preachers and invited them to come to Corris, and when returning from Abersytwyth a few days later they responded to the call, and standing on the wall of the fold in which stray cattle were held, delivered the gospel message with considerable effect. Jones (Bathafarn) visited the locality again shortly afterwards, as did John Maurice, the services being held in a cottage kindly lent by John Athelstone Owen, Maes-y-gorwyr, who was a zealous Wesleyan, and shortly after began to preach. The meetings were then removed to the house of Evan Rowland, a tailor, and after a while they were taken to Erwleppa, then occupied by Edward Jones. The preaching services were few and far between, and held only on week-days. In 1808 a site was promised by Mr. Thomes Owen, Tyn-y-Ceunant, himself a zealous Wesleyan; and James Evans (Tynyllechwedd), Edward Jones (Erwleppa), and Rowland Hughes (Cwmeiddaw) worked most persistently to secure the erection of a chapel of their own—an undertaking which was speedily accomplished. Through some reverse in his circumstances, Thomas Owen, who intended giving the site and chapel, withdrew his promise and demanded rent, and as no lease had been secured they were not in a position to dispute his claim. In some short time there were thirty members of Society, but they fell off, and six only constituted the Wesleyan church at Corris. James Evans was the first class-leader. Elizabeth Lloyd, generally known as Betti Dafydd, became the true leader of the Society there. There were only two others, her husband Ellis Lloyd, and Edward Jones, Erwleppa, who could take part in the service. Sunday after Sunday these three would hold three meetings in the little chapel. There was one man, a zealous hearer, who would sometimes read a chapter, but as the men were not capable of doing so, good old Betti would have to read on all other occasions.

Once she said to her husband, ‘Ellis, I shall only read to-night; you must pray.’ ‘Well, I will do so,’ said Ellis, ‘if praying is too much trouble for you.’ ‘No, no,’ said Betti, ‘it’s not too much trouble.’ ‘Well, go on then,’ retorted Ellis; ‘it is heaven we want here,’ implying that the good old woman would be sure to draw down heaven if she prayed. They struggled on without apparent success for years, and the good old people were often greatly disheartened. Ellis suggested that they should see the superintendent and give up the cause there. ‘What!’ said Betti, ‘give up our little cause? That is not the way to prosper. No, we will hold on, faithful unto death.’ So the small band decided to go to a great meeting at Dinas Mawddwy, to which reference has been made, and see the superintendent, the Rev. Hugh Hughes. They did so and placed the matter before him. He promised all the help he could render, and said he would go there to preach. His visit was made a blessing; some of the hearers, who had been impressed with the zeal and earnestness of the faithful few, cast in their lot with them. Richard Thomas (Pantydwr) and Richard Evans were made class-leaders. William Davies ere long came to the village to reside, and was made a leader. John Edwards removed to Corris, and Humphrey Richards, and they were also appointed class-leaders. The friends now began to feel their need of a better chapel, and agreed to make an effort to build one. A lease was secured and a chapel erected in 1838, and John Owen (Cyffin) preached in the building before it was completed. At the opening, the preachers were John Lloyd, John Jones (Llanwddyn,) Jarman (Llanidloes), and Isaac Jones. The population was steadily increasing, and with a new chapel Wesleyan Methodism developed more rapidly. About that time the temperance movement took a firm hold of the people of Corris, and several of the trustees were determined that, so far as they could decide, no one should preach in

their pulpit who was not an abstainer. As there were some able preachers in the Circuit not abstainers, who objected to this dictation, the Rev. John Bartley, the superintendent, had considerable trouble. There were faults on both sides, and while it hindered the work for a time, fortunately wiser counsels prevailed, and the work prospered. It is just to the Wesleyan Society at Corris to say that they have been 'stedfast and unmovable,' ever abounding in the temperance cause, and their position in that branch of Christian work is to-day second to none in the Welsh work. The Society after the new chapel was erected continued to grow steadily. Hugh Roberts became a class-leader and local preacher. There was a William Hughes, who, notwithstanding his extreme views on temperance, did considerable service with singing and the Sunday school. Robert Jones was a good musician, and rendered great help with that important part of the service. It was about this time that his son John Jones (Vulcan) began to read and think, and his great abilities were soon discovered. He was appointed teacher, and very soon a class-leader, and although he considered Bethesda his natural home, Corris was his religious home, and up to the time of his death he cherished an affectionate attachment to the people of that place. Vulcan was a man of exceptional ability, varied, strong, philosophical. His work on the Atonement, Scepticism, Logic, and his poem on the Bible, will give him a position among the ablest authors of his country. His genial sympathetic nature and beautiful transparency of character made him one of the most lovable of men. He died December 17, 1889, aged sixty-four, in the thirty-sixth year of his ministry. Owen Owen, the father of R. T. Owen and David Owen, was connected with the Wesleyans of Corris at the same time. R. T. Owen entered the ministry in 1862, and died at Portdinorwic, October 1, 1871, his sudden removal at the early age of thirty being perhaps one of the most mysterious dispensa-

tions in connection with Wesleyan Methodism. Mr. Owen had reached a position in the Welsh pulpit of exceptional promise; few of his contemporaries were equally popular and useful, and none more profoundly beloved. The father of James Evans and his family were connected with the Society. James Evans entered the ministry in 1864, and died at Dolgelly, October 15, 1874. Like his companion, R. T. Owen, he took a position amongst the best preachers of his native country, was a man of great capacity, more highly cultured than his colleagues, and as pure as the crystal spring. The father of the Rev. Evan Evans was also living at Corris about the same time. John Edwards, who has been a class-leader for many years, and John Owen, who was one of the most zealous local preachers, removed from Eglwysfach to Corris in 1858. Hugh Owen (Tyno), William Lewis, David Owen, Owen Roberts, all these with their families—men of sound principles, intelligent and loyal Methodists—were heartily working in the church, and no wonder the chapel was soon well filled. In 1866 a large chapel was erected in a more central position, and opened for divine worship on the 13th and 14th of September of that year. The ministers above mentioned who had gone out from Corris took the services. Besides the preachers mentioned, David Jones, who entered the ministry (as referred to elsewhere), was a local preacher in Corris; while H. Roberts and Evan Roberts, the latter one of the few who accepted the Calvinistic doctrine and joined that body, in connection with which he has been an acceptable minister of the gospel for many years, William Lewis and David Owen, have not only rendered valuable services to the Society there, but occupied eminent positions as heralds of the gospel of peace. W. Lewis, who is still at Corris, is as acceptable in the pulpit as any minister; and this is also true of Mr. D. Owen, who has been for several years in London. J. M. Owen, who entered the ministry

in 1872, and is deservedly popular among his brethren in the Welsh work, and T. N. Roberts, who became a travelling preacher in 1887, and his brother, G. B. Roberts, who is doing good service as a local preacher, were brought out by this church.

Prior to the erection of the new chapel, a branch Sunday school had been commenced in Upper Corris in the house of John Lewis, Tyneint. It afterwards met at Tynlleckwedd, the home of the Rev. James Evans; and later on it was taken to Tynyberth, to the house of David Thomas, a son of the first Wesleyan in the place. It was for some time very feeble. In 1860 Robert Evans, with renewed energy, took up the matter, and assisted by Humphrey Evans, Hugh Owen, W. Hughes (Gaewern), John Lewis, and John Edwards, the leader of the singing, was more successful. An old workshop was then taken, which was made fairly comfortable, and in addition to the Sunday school, other services were frequently held. Mr. Owen Roberts, father of the Rev. T. M. Roberts, one of the most intelligent working men the writer has known, devoted his time, influence, and energy in building up the branch school. In 1875 a new chapel, known as Moriah, in connection with the erection of which the friends at Corris worked well, was opened for divine worship. Hugh Owen was the first class-leader, a wise, devoted, and good man; and John Owen, father of the Rev. J. M. Owen, was asked to assist as a class-leader for a time, which he did with all the diligence characteristic of him. Henry Jones (Cwmeiddaw), John Owen (Gwynfryn), Rhys Owen, John Williams, and Hugh Pugh are also class-leaders in Moriah. John Owen has been a local preacher of growing power for some years, and T. Pierce and T. H. Evans are also local preachers. There are now in the locality two good chapels, with a number of intelligent, zealous, and exemplary leaders, officers, and Sunday-school teachers. The Sunday school has been eminently successful, and to it the Methodist

Church owes very largely the number of eminent preachers sent out from this Society to adorn the Methodist ministry. Mr. Owen, Braichgoch, a near relative of the Rev. Owen Owen, was a great help to the few Wesleyans in the days of their feebleness. The names of Evan Jones, John Lewis, Richard Pugh, Lewis Edwards, Thomas Pierce, Evan Edwards, J. Manuel, J. P. Jones (Glasynwys), J. Jones, H. Harris, and others, will remind those who have known the Society of the intellectual and moral strength of Wesleyan Methodism in this locality.

Abergynolwyn was probably visited by Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) when he was stationed at Machynlleth. The population was small, and the neighbourhood was surrounded by Methodist Societies at Bryncrug, Llanegryn, Pennal, and Corris, by which it was to some extent overshadowed. At all these places there were men of exceptional ability who identified themselves with the church. Edward Anwyl and his brother Griffith and Lewis Jones were at Llanegryn, Humphrey Jones at Pennal, and Ellis Evans at Bryncrug. The first services were held in a cottage, which is known still as the Little Chapel. The first members were Hugh Pugh, Maesypandy ; Robert Thomas, Pantydwr ; Robert Price, Court ; and Harry Dafydd, Tynyffordd. A few good people kept together at Abergynolwyn, worshipping in cottages. The parents of Evan Roberts, who in 1832 began to preach at Aberceргir in the Machynlleth Circuit, and who about the year 1840 emigrated to America, where he died, November 24, 1885, were living at Abergynolwyn. Evan was born at Abergynolwyn in 1814. About the year 1825, Evan Evans came to live at Bwlchymaen, in the parish of Towyn. Evan was the son of Humphrey Evans, one of the first group of members at Llanegryn. The family were all faithful Methodists. David Humphreys, a brother, was a class-leader at Llanegryn, and afterwards at Bryncrug. Evan Evans was appointed a class-leader at Llanegryn when only twenty-four years of age. It was a great acquisition to the few Wesleyans at

Abergynolwyn when he came to reside amongst them. He was made class-leader, the duties of which office he discharged with intelligent zeal and efficiency for many years. He had two and a half miles to walk to chapel, but he was one of the most regular attendants. Three times every Sunday he was at the services in the chapel, notwithstanding that it involved his walking fully fifteen miles in order to be present at the means of grace. After a life of faithful and consistent service he died in the triumph of the gospel, May 20, 1870. About the year 1834 the Rev. Evan Hughes, who was then superintendent of the Circuit, was preaching at Abergynolwyn, and Mr. Owen Owen, then a reckless, sporting young man, was induced by some of his companions to go and hear the preacher at the Little Chapel. His only reason for going was a desire to please his companions, and to see and hear something he might be able to ridicule. But while the preacher 'reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,' Owen Owen trembled. Unlike Felix, he yielded his heart to Christ that day. The incident created a sensation throughout the valley. The Dolfanog family were widely known. They held a good social position, but several members were celebrated exponents of the noble art of physical endurance, and Owen was the leader of the young men of the parish. He had been studying under an old doctor for the medical profession, his teacher had recently died, and he was now at home on the farm. Many prophesied his fall. Some said he had gone to the Society to see and hear for himself as to how the meetings were carried on, with the view of ridiculing the whole church. They were soon disappointed; Mr. Owen began to work with all his heart. The renovation of the Little Chapel was the first duty he undertook. He had received a good education, had been articled for the legal profession, which he gave up when he started his medical studies. Mr. Owen was a novice in religious matters, but he had experienced a change

of heart, and was devoting all his energies to the honour and glory of God. In nine months Edmund Evans asked him to go with him to Llwyngwril, where he made his first attempt at preaching. He leaped straight to popularity, and was in great demand. In 1836 he became a candidate for the ministry, was four years on the list of reserve, but during that time was engaged as a hired local preacher. In 1840 he became a travelling preacher, and died at Pontypridd, November 15, 1887, aged seventy-six. He was a man of robust constitution, rare mental abilities, and fully conversant with mental and moral science in their relation to biblical and moral questions. His sermons were fine productions, massive, clear, full of evangelical truth, and delivered with great power. For nearly half a century he occupied a position among the best preachers of Wales, and the sturdy uprightness of his character demonstrated the true nobility of the man. It was an honour to Abergynolwyn Society to have given the Welsh pulpit such a fine preacher.

Abergynolwyn was isolated, and for many years rarely had a visit from the minister excepting on a week-night. The devotion of Evan Evans, Evan Roberts, Lewis Edwards, Hugh Pugh, and Owen Edwards was most exemplary. In recent years, with the development of the quarries, the population has increased, and the Society has benefited. In 1869 a request was made to Conference for permission to erect a new chapel, and the effort was followed with success. A good chapel and a good Society in a fairly prosperous condition are found in the village at the present time. Hugh Lewis was made class-leader. Mr. Edward Edwards, who was for several years class-leader, Circuit steward, and local preacher, did much in order to bring the Society to its present state. His uncle, who had been a good supporter of the cause, in his will left certain cottage property to the Wesleyan cause at Abergynolwyn. Under the Mortmain Act the gift was not valid, and the property came into the possession of the nephew.

Mr. Edward Edwards knew the uncle's desire, and most nobly handed over to the trustees the property in the most honourable manner. This good man died at the end of 1890, and left a great void in the church, and more recently his brother, John Edwards, was cut down. The sudden death of John Lewis, formerly of Corris, was a great loss to this church. There are, however, several good men left at Abergynolwyn, and Methodism has now a good position.

Harlech (which means 'on the stone' or 'rock,' or 'fine stone' or 'rock'—the English equivalent would be Beaurock) is nominally the county town. It was formerly called the Twr of Bronwen. According to some historians, the tower was built as early as 550 by Maelgwyn Gwynedd, Prince of North Wales. It is generally believed that Edward I. built the existing castle, which is one of the most magnificent in the Principality, on the ruins of the earlier one. Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) was stationed on the Carnarvon Circuit in 1804, and in the following October, in company with William Parry of Llandegai, who was then a hired local preacher, started on a round through Merioneth and Montgomery to Aberystwyth—a tour which will ever be regarded as of great importance and interest to the Methodist historian. The number of services held, of Societies formed, and of souls brought to Christ, will give it a place worthy of apostolic days. On their journey they called at Harlech, and stayed for a short time at the Blue Lion. They did not preach on that occasion, but their Christianly bearing won the confidence of Mr. Lewis Jones, who kept the inn, and arrangements were made for the two Wesleyan preachers to hold a service in the parlour of the inn on their return. On the appointed day there was a large assembly to hear the preachers of the new sect, and the people were driven to read the Bible, think, and talk.

When Messrs. Jones and Parry had returned to their Circuit, Mr. Griffith Hughes, then a young man at Pwllheli, and who had just begun to preach, was about to start on a

similar journey. The young man had recently been converted, and in undertaking to visit the town and village at that time, and under such circumstances, he demonstrated his faith in God and his mission, and his absolute surrender of self to the service of his Master. He visited Harlech, November 4, 1804, preached to a large company of people in the same room. John Maurice was the next Wesleyan to visit Harlech. The Society had now been formed, and the friends decided to rent a room in which to hold their meetings. Lewis Jones was appointed the first class-leader; G. Jones, Creecieith, and J. Davies, Caergethin, were among the early converts. After holding their meetings for ten years in Ty-Eiddaw, a chapel was erected and opened for divine worship, November 23, and 24, 1814; Messrs. Owen Jones, Thomas Thomas, W. Batten, R. Humphreys, and R. Jones, Dolgelly, being the preachers on that occasion. Mr. John Davies opened his house for the Wesleyan preachers, and his family grew up in the fear of the Lord. He died in peace in 1828, leaving a widow and seven children. The son emigrated to America, but all the six daughters became honourably connected with Methodism in various places. The eldest removed to Llanfeirian, Anglesey, and afterwards to Bodlawen, marrying Mr. W. Williams, an eminent class-leader. Jane, the second daughter, continued at Harlech, and her residence, the ‘Clogwyn,’ was one of the hospitable homes in the old town. The third daughter married Mr. Williams, Tyddynhwrdd, Aberffraw, a member of one of the prominent Wesleyan families in Anglesey; Laura became the wife of William Edwards, Gwrthian, Aberdaron, a leading family in Lleyn; Catherine became Mrs. Roberts, Caerffynon, one of the most interesting homes in North Wales; Ellen, the youngest, not robust in health, continued a devout follower of Christ up to the time of her death. Surely the hand of God was upon this family. They were corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace, while their descendants are like olive

plants, for the blessing of the Lord is upon their children's children. Two other young women connected with the Harlech Society were the daughters of Mr. John Owen, Grafton. Miss Owen married the Rev. William Davies (Africa). She died at Kidwelly, April 11, 1841, and was considered by all who knew her to be one of the most efficient of minister's wives. Her sister was equally beloved and respected, and beautifully adorned the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. She was confined to her bed for years, and so frail that she could not even hold up her head; but after four years was suddenly restored to health, in answer to prayer, and lived to serve Christ for thirty-eight years. While her parents were attending the means of grace, a message was sent to them, asking them to come home to their daughter as she had been wonderfully restored. Mr. and Mrs. Owen concluded she had passed away, and could not realize the fact when they found their daughter in the kitchen exhorting the servants to give their hearts to the Great Physician. The Rev. Evan Hughes improved the occasion by preaching a sermon, taking as his text, 'Behold, thou art made whole.' Mary Jones and Mary Williams, Pant Mawr, were worthy companions of those afore mentioned. Morgan and Henry Parry were class-leaders and exemplary Christians. J. L. Richards, when a young man, became a class-leader and local preacher, entered the ministry in 1825, and died at Llansantffraid, March 18, 1865. He was a highly cultured minister of the gospel, for more than twenty years was secretary of the North Wales District, and, if reserved and quiet, was reliable, wise in counsel, and firm in the defence of the right. John Evan (Shon Evan) was another class-leader, eminent in his day. Captain W. Williams and Shon William, the leader of the singing, were useful and pious men. Joseph Lewis, Cefnmain, was a reliable class-leader. More recently, Captain and Mrs. Edwards (Caergethin), Catherine Williams, Miss Jones (Penygarth), have generously supported the work at Harlech. Ioan

Glan, Menai, who is connected with the Harlech Society, is an eminent poet, an able preacher and worker, who has made for himself a name which will long live. There is now at Harlech a good chapel (sanctioned by the Conference in 1870). The Society is abundant in useful work, and, like the town, is built on a rock, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail.

Talysarnau, which means ‘front causeways’ or ‘roads,’ lies between Harlech and Portmadoc, and is known amongst Wesleyans as ‘Zoar.’ The chapel, indeed, gives the name to the locality. When Messrs. Jones (Bathafarn) and Parry (Llandegai) had conducted the meeting at Harlech, Robert Isaac, Tynygroes, an intelligent man who had come to hear the Wesleyan preachers, said, ‘These are the people and this is the doctrine that I like.’ He invited the preachers to his house, and at two o’clock the next day the gospel message of free grace was proclaimed to a good company in the village of Brynybwabach. This occurred in October 1804. A fortnight later, Mr. Griffith Owen, Llangybi, after preaching, invited those who wished to join the Society to remain to the after-meeting. Morris Williams, Talysarnau; Robert Owen, Aberdunant Uwchaf; John Thomas, Glanyrafon; and Catherine Ellis accepted the invitation, and were the first to identify themselves with the Wesleyan Church in this locality. Mr. Edward Jones, Corwen, and John Maurice, Carnarvon, also preached there shortly after. For some time the meetings were held at alternate places, the second being Pandy’s-Singrug, where several cast in their lot with the Wesleyans. Mr. Hugh Carter conducted a service there of great power, after which ten persons decided to join the new sect. After a while, the two small Societies were amalgamated, their meetings being held at Brynybwabach. In 1816 Edmund Evans became a Wesleyan Methodist, and in about two months’ time was appointed class-leader. The chapel was not erected till the year 1824. It was opened for divine worship

on July 2 of that year, the preachers being Messrs. Hugh Hughes, Owen Thomas, Edward Jones (3rd), and Richard Cadwaladr. The chapel was a success, it was soon filled, and the locality was won for Wesleyan Methodism. In 1839 a new chapel was erected of much larger dimensions, attached to which is a burying-ground, while the old chapel was converted into cottages. There was also a day-school, forming a complete set of premises for Methodist purposes. Mr. Edmund Evans began to preach in 1818, and continued faithful up to the time of his death in 1863. Even before this his zeal for his Master's service was manifest. He would go ten, fifteen, and twenty miles to assist the weak Societies to hold a prayer-meeting. It is known that in company with other young men like himself, he has walked from Talysarnau to Bontddu, a distance of over twenty miles, to hold a prayer-meeting, returning over the mountains to Bezer to the evening meeting. Edmund Evans¹ was a powerful, pointed, whole-souled preacher of the gospel. He was endowed with a robust constitution and a powerful and effective voice, and worked in season and out of season. His sermons contained good, solid matter, and were earnestly and plainly and most effectively delivered. He never entered the ministry, but he was truly a travelling preacher. There may have been other local preachers as able and eloquent, as earnest and loyal, as good and true, but up to the present time no Welsh Wesleyan Society can rejoice in one who will take the same position as Edmund Evans. He was in the Welsh Church what Billy Dawson was in the English. Not that he was like the Yorkshire preacher—he probably lacked the Englishman's descriptive powers—but in many other things was his superior. Edmund Evans was short, sharp, witty, and of considerable culture, and never swerved in his attachment to Methodism and its ministers. William Owen, who began to preach at

¹ *Vide 'Biography of Edmund Evans' by Dr. William Davies; Eurusgrawn, 1870-71.*

Zoar, went out to Australia, where he did good service, and Griffith Owen, a nephew of Edmund Evans, and his son, who went to America, were brought up in this church. In 1863 permission was given to enlarge the chapel, and it is now a strong centre of Methodism. The names of Ellen Owen, Gwen Owen, Roberts (Friddfedw), J. Ellis (Moelyglo), David Roberts, and Edmund and Griffith Roberts are honourably connected with this Society ; and the old families are represented by their children's children, the robust Methodism of the past being fully maintained. Lewis Owen, who entered the ministry in 1873, and is the superintendent of an important Circuit in the Welsh work, is another preacher who comes from Talysarnau.

Mr. Wesley on his way from Dolgelly to Carnarvon, through roaring wind and beating rain, wet and tired, reached Tanybwlc'h, where he rested for a night. The family, he says, understood English, an uncommon thing in those parts in those days. Mr. Wesley spoke closely to these people, and they appeared much affected, particularly when all joined in prayer. He had intended to start off early next morning, but the tide being in, he was delayed from crossing into Carnarvonshire for three or four hours ; so Mr. Wesley, never idle, sat down in a little cottage and translated *Aldrich's Logic*, and in the afternoon he crossed Moel-y-don ferry into Anglesey. Mr. Wesley was welcomed at Tanybwlc'h some time after.

The Wesleyan preachers did not visit the neighbourhood of Ffestiniog prior to the year 1806, and it is not known with certainty whether William Jones, Llanelidan, or Robert Humphreys was the first ; both were stationed on the Dolgelly Circuit that year. The following year, when Hugh Carter and Hugh Hughes were on the Circuit, a small cottage was rented in which to hold services. The room was small and dark, but they made it as chapel-like as possible. David Jones, Henry Evans and his wife, Henry Jones and his wife, Gwen Hughes and her daughter, and a few zealous Wesleyans worshipped God in the midst of considerable

opposition. During those years the Wesleyans were ever helping each other when anything special was going on ; they would travel all night in order to assist their brethren, even if it were twenty miles distant. In this neighbourhood when they had a preacher on Sunday, he would take Trawsfynydd, Maentwrog, and Ffestiniog, and possibly some other place the same day, and many of the people would follow him to all these places.

Jane Hughes of Ffestiniog was a woman of deep piety and considerable ability. She was largely instrumental in leading Edmund Evans to begin to preach, and in moulding his character for the work. Her letters to him fully demonstrate this fact. An incident in connection with a meeting at Maentwrog, related on the authority of the Rev. Hugh Hughes, who was present, attracted a great deal of attention. A large number of people had come to the meeting, and it was customary to provide food as far as possible for the visitors. A farmer by the name of Cadwaladr Evans told Mr. Hughes to publish that those who would not be provided for elsewhere would be welcomed to his house. Scores of people were seen on their way to the good farmer's house. The servants were frightened, and said, 'We have provided for many, but not sufficient for half this number.' Yet all ate and were filled and they had to spare, and so great was the crowd the servants insisted that a miracle had been wrought. This incident was a topic of conversation for years after. A small chapel was afterwards erected at Maentwrog. Edmund Evans preached regularly at these places, and for some years was looked upon as the pastor of the Societies of Trawsfynydd, Maentwrog, Ffestiniog, Penrhyn, Harlech, and Zoar. In 1830 Mr. Henry Evans built at his own cost a new chapel at Ffestiniog ; although small, it was a great improvement on the old cottage. In 1838 they purchased the Calvinistic Methodist chapel, known as Capelgwyn (White Chapel). Charles of Bala was one of the original trustees.

It was inserted in the deeds that Calvinistic doctrines only were to be preached in that chapel, but how the difficulty was removed is a mystery. At the reopening of the chapel by the Wesleyans, Mr. Bryan was invited to preach the first sermon in it. He read out as his text with considerable emphasis, ‘This day is salvation come to this house.’ Mr. Bryan had gone through the storms of persecution in the early introduction of Wesleyan Methodism, and up to the time of his death continued to preach to all and at all times the doctrines of Wesley. He was allowed to say things that no other man dare say. In 1859–60 the great revival of religion brought many to Christian fellowship in connection with this Society, and the chapel was considerably improved.

The development of the Blaenau Quarries necessitated a large number of working men lodging near to their work during the greater part of the week, in consequence of which it was arranged for the week-night preaching to be held near to the quarry. In 1855 an attempt was made to form a Society, and an application was made for permission to build a chapel at Blaenau, and about 1861 the Rev. John Evans (A) made a successful effort to form a Society there. In 1863 the District meeting decided to appoint a home missionary to work it with Penmachno. The Rev. Evan Evans (A) was appointed to take up this work. Mr. Evans found Mrs. Jones, Bryn Dinas, a sister of the Rev. Robert Williams, Bodfari, and her sons and her brother, Edward Williams, ready to receive him. For some time the meetings were held at Bryn Dinas, which was soon found too small. Mr. R. Jones was appointed class-leader, and he and Edward Williams became useful local preachers. Mr. Evans frequently preached in the open air, and found the Calvinistic Methodists and Congregationalists very sympathetic and ready to lend him the use of their chapels. A leasehold site was secured, and a good chapel erected, Messrs. David Roberts, David Hughes, O. G. Williams, Robert Jones, Thomas

Jones, Edward Williams, William Jones, Griffith Lloyd, William Francis, David Roberts (2nd), John Jones, and David Rowlands becoming the trustees. In 1867 Blaenau, Ffestiniog, Trawsfynydd, and Maentwrog were made into a Circuit, and more recently it has been again rearranged, and Blaenau is now a very important part of the Portmadoc Circuit. Jane Hughes; Mr. Thomas, Llanrwst; Henry Evans; Mrs. Donne (wife of Dr. Donne, and mother of the Rev. James Donne, an eminent Calvinistic minister), and David Jones, the old class-leader;—(David Jones never left the grass to grow on his path to a shady corner in the garden, where he held sweet communion with God);—Richard Jones, a local preacher in the early days, rendered good service to the Society. Humphrey Morris, J. Roberts (B), and John Hughes (C) began to preach while at Ffestiniog. Edward Parry, who entered the ministry in 1859, and has laboured with great acceptance in the English work, was converted and began to preach at Ffestiniog. H. Humphreys, who was a class-leader and local preacher at Blaenau, and gained a leading position in the neighbourhood as a leader of religious thought and action, was suddenly cut down. Morgan Jones was one of the most thoughtful local preachers in the Welsh work. T. Williams and O. Thomas have honourably maintained the reputation of the good men who preceded them. Evan Jones, who entered the ministry in 1875, and is deservedly held in high esteem by all who know him, and his brother, O. Jones, who recently returned from Honduras, and is now in the English work, came out from Blaenau. William Roberts, Maentwrog, one of the most popular local preachers in the Principality, has been class-leader and steward and an active temperance worker for years.

The names of Anthony Hughes, who had been a class-leader at Pentredwr in the Llangollen Circuit, was a brother of the Rev. Thomas Hughes, the author of the *Functions of the Human Will* and other works, and one of the most noted

and godly men in his native place, and became even more so during his latter years at Blaenau; William Jones, Lord Street, father of the Revs. Evan and Owen Jones, first at Trawsfynydd, and in after years at Blaenau; Hugh Roberts, William Rowlands, Evan Hughes, Griffith Jones, Trawsfynydd; H. Jones, Ffestiniog; and H. Evans, have laboured most diligently to give Wesleyan Methodism a good position in this populous district. The Blaenau Chapel is a large one, with a strong, active, intelligent church. Ffestiniog has a good chapel; Trawsfynydd, also, with hearty and intelligent members and very good singers. Tanygrisiau has a small chapel, while the Maentwrog Chapel holds its own. It is difficult for the historian to pass these villages and cottages, and to follow the old Methodist record, without being impressed by the zeal, diligence, and unselfishness with which the early Methodists served their God. These men and women showed that they believed that the Cross of Christ demanded their life, their soul, and all they possessed, and by whole-hearted service they freely gave their all to the service of the Divine Master.

The growth of the slate quarries in the neighbourhood of Ffestiniog has also secured the development of the Portmadoc District. The Methodist preachers visited Penmorfa, and formed a Society there at an early date. Some of the members of that Society resided at Portmadoc, and occasionally services were held in the homes of those friends. After a while a small cottage was taken behind a row of houses in London Road, the thoroughfare through the Port towards Merionethshire. Mr. Edmund Evans exercised a powerful influence over the friends at the Port. The cottage sufficed for a while, but gradually they came to realize that they must have a chapel before much more good could be done. The Society was then included in the Pwllheli Circuit. The zeal of Miss Eleanor Jones, one of the daughters of the Caecethen family, did much to inspire the Portmadoc friends to talk and think and press for a new chapel. Mr. Edmund

Evans could not see his way clear to agree to the undertaking. During the ministry of the Rev. Griffith Hughes, in company with Mr. R. M. Preece, Carnarvon, the superintendent secured a site, and without consultation with quarterly meeting, or the sanction of chapel committee, they let the contract. Mr. Lewis Williams, blockmaker, living at Portmadoc, was the only person who could become a trustee. There was no money in hand, and at the suggestion of Mr. Preece, the bank was resorted to for the amount that would be required. Shortly afterwards Mr. Edmund Evans became a trustee, and David Griffiths and others also co-operated. In 1839 the chapel was opened for public worship, but at the time was under a heavy debt. Other troubles followed. The extras were heavy, moneys were lost, the contractor managed to escape, and finally the trust was most seriously embarrassed. Great difficulty was experienced in finding money on interest. There was a misunderstanding among those who had commenced the work, and a lack of harmony which added to their difficulties.¹

Captain Williams of Harlech came to the rescue of the trustees in their great trouble, and lent on interest the money they needed. Mr. Edmund Evans was granted permission to collect toward the chapel in various Circuits in the North Wales District; and as the result of his diligence and popularity, the chapel was secured to the Connexion, the debt was reduced, and the friends were able to cope with their responsibilities. For some years the Society was very feeble at the Port. There were, however, a few faithful in the night who were privileged to see the dawn of a brighter day. Some of the old Methodists who worshipped at Wern before the foundation of the Society at Portmadoc joined in the latter place. Owen Evans was a zealous Wesleyan, living at the Port before any Methodist Society was formed there. He left for years, resided at Dolgelly and Pwllheli,

¹ ‘Biography of Edmund Evans,’ by Dr. Davies; *Eurgrawn*, 1871, pp. 3, 4.

and returned to find a Wesleyan chapel at Portmadoc. John Jones, formerly from Criccieth, removed to Beddgelert, but he and his wife walked regularly to the Port, which was the nearest Wesleyan chapel. Mr. Jones was class-leader for a while at the Port, a position which he also filled with great credit for many years after his removal to Carnarvon. Owen Morris, Penmorfa-bychan; Mary Lloyd, Catherine Evans, and Ellinor Evans, The Mount, were zealous and diligent workers in connection with the little Society. Captain W. Williams, who had assisted the trustees in their difficulty, removed to Portmadoc, and his family became a great help to the work in their new home. His daughters, Mrs. Captain Lloyd Morris and Mrs. Captain Richards, were both faithful Methodists. Mrs. Roberts, Caerffynon, also came to live in this town. The Wesleyan Society now began to realize its existence, and to put on strength. It was now transferred to the Barmouth Circuit, and the home of the second minister. The old chapel became too small, and a new and much larger one was erected; galleries have since been added, and it is now a large and good chapel. In 1879 it was made the head of a Circuit, with the Rev. Griffith Jones as its first superintendent. Small chapels have been erected at Bron Teewyn and Porthygest. Robert Evans, one of the old leaders of Portmadoc, is the grandson of one of those who stood by Jones (Bathafarn) on his first visit to Pwllheli. D. R. Thomas, Circuit steward, R. Reese, J. Evans, T. W. Lloyd, D. Morris, have all rendered valuable support in the growth of this Society.

The history of the Penrhynedraeth Society is very closely connected with that of Zoar, and was largely under the charge of Mr. Edmund Evans. The old chapel has been renovated, and the Society and Sunday school are active, united, and prosperous.

When the Rev. Lot Hughes came to Dolgelly in 1826 and

found the chapels almost empty, crushed with heavy debts, he says that Mr. Jones of Tynycoed was the only person able and willing to take his share of the responsibilities. Griffith Hughes preached at Arthog in 1804. Griffith Owen, J. Jones (Corwen), and Jones (Bathafarn) held services there. Mr. J. Jones (Tynycoed) was the first class-leader. Occasional preaching services were held at Tynycoed and other cottages, but there were but a few Wesleyan Methodists. Mr. Jones removed to Aberdyfi, others died, and the little Society was only a smoking flax. Mr. Howell Griffith was the leader, and was a good man. About the same time there was a young man in the neighbourhood of Llanegryn who had been under religious impressions, and after hearing a sermon preached by Mr. Lot Hughes, he decided to identify himself with the Wesleyans. There were only eleven members at Llanegryn at that time; the young man made up the dozen. Shortly afterwards he entered into married life, and removed to Arthog. There were nine members at the new place: the meetings were held in a small cottage near the bridge. The membership at Arthog was subsequently reduced to five, and William Lewis and his wife were frequently the only members who could take part in the meeting. They had one sermon a fortnight, on alternate Sundays, if the preachers kept their appointments. On the other Sunday William Lewis would give out a hymn, read, and pray. The friends would sing another hymn, Mrs. Lewis would pray, and after a third hymn, William Lewis would conclude the meeting with prayer. They held on, however; the five increased to eleven, and then they undertook to build a chapel in 1833. The little Society continued to increase. John Jones, Tynycoed, son of the old leader, inherited the property, and came to live at the old home; he was a very good man, and rendered considerable service in various ways, and especially with the temperance movement, but he afterwards emigrated to America. During the years 1859–60, the great revival

which began in Cardiganshire was felt at Arthog, and many were brought to Christ. Old William Lewis, whose power in prayer was marvellous, was made a blessing to many. ‘His prayers bring down the blessings from heavenly places,’ said one; while another told how the people who had not given their hearts to Christ were haunted by his prayers. He had the satisfaction of seeing two of his sons preachers of the gospel,—the eldest, William Lewis, is at Corris, where he has been active and useful. David Lewis became a travelling preacher in 1861, and died near Preston, November 2, 1888. He possessed a good voice, great physical strength, burning zeal for the salvation of souls, and often rose to a high pitch of eloquence and overwhelming pathos. In his intense earnestness he overtaxed his voice and strength, and was struck down suddenly in the midst of his usefulness in the forty-ninth year of his age. The anticipated success in connection with the Tynycoed Quarries, worked by the Messrs. Davis, Blaengwawr, South Wales, stimulated the Arthog friends, who undertook the erection of a much larger and better chapel. William Williams was another preacher raised up at Arthog, and Lewis Lewis and John Jones have been faithful class-leaders. They were disappointed as to the rapid growth of the place, but have struggled nobly to pay off their debt, and are hoping for a bright future. The poet Pope longed for ‘honest fame or none’; the honest men we have referred to ‘lived unblemished lives,’ and ‘died to fame unknown’; but there is a sanctified influence which fills the traditions of their respective localities with fragrance which will assist in purifying the moral atmosphere of the county for generations to come.

A great effort was made to erect a chapel at Bala, which was opened for divine worship on July 1 and 2, 1835. A Society was also formed at Llanuwchlyn, and in 1839 the permission of the Conference was asked with a view to

building a chapel there. The chapel, however, was never erected, and in 1852 the sanction to sell the Bala Chapel was granted. This was a great misfortune, because it meant finally withdrawing from a large tract of country, which in those days needed the more vigorous and spiritual preaching of the gospel of free grace. That need has passed away, and at the present time a full, free, and present salvation is preached from almost every pulpit in that neighbourhood. Wesleyan Methodism has not laboured in vain. The number of ministers given to the Methodist Church is of itself an honour to the county. The names of Edward Anwyl, Rowland Hughes, and Owen Owen will suffice to prove this statement; and when the eminent local preachers and class-leaders we have mentioned in this chapter are taken into consideration, the Methodists of Merioneth will have every reason to take courage and to go on with their work. The present generation ‘taste the joy that springs from the labour’ of the past, and ‘now the task is smoothly done.’

CHAPTER XXIII.

ANGLESEY.

Anglesey — John Elias — Christmas Evans — Williams, Wern — Wesley's Visits — Wesley mobbed — Dr. Coke — Holyhead Society — Chapel — Owen Thomas — Beaumaris — John Hughes — New Chapel — Amlwch — Mr. Paynter — William Owen — Aberffraw — Thomas Morris — Llangefni — Newbwrch — Llanfair — The Brothers David and John Williams — John Jones and the Queen — Borth — Elim — Thomas Templeton — Llangoed — Owen Williams — Llanddona — Cenmaes — Mr. Bryan — Persecution — Llanfair-yn-nghornwy — Maelog — Agitation — Miserable Failure.

ANGLESEY is often supposed to be the least interesting of Welsh counties. The *Monites*, however, warmly repudiate this remark, and use the bardic appellation, ‘*Mon mam Cymru*’ (Mona, the mother of Wales). This designation was probably based on an old belief that the soil of the island was so fertile as to raise a sufficient quantity of corn for the maintenance of the population of the whole of Wales. It is more probable that the Isle of Mona and the Isle of Man derive their names from *Mon*, which means, ‘what is isolated,’ ‘separate.’ The English name was bestowed on it in 818 or 819 by the Saxon king who subdued it, calling it the Isle of the Angles or English. The Menai Straits present one of the finest views in Wales. The population is small and scattered, and Calvinistic Methodism has a strong hold throughout this county. John Elias lived, worked, died, and is buried in the Mona Island. His influence was great during his life, and his memory is justly revered by all Welshmen. The three great preachers, John Elias, Christmas Evans, and Williams of Wern, will ever occupy a

prominent place in the history of the Welsh people. The three men were unlike each other, and their strength lay in different directions. Elias was the greatest orator, Evans excelled in fertility of imagination and the power of dramatic illustration, while Williams excelled the two in his grasp of underlying and unifying principles. John Elias had great capacity, Christmas Evans genius, Williams of Wern analytic precision. Elias was the precise, epigrammatic reasoner and consummate rhetorician ; Evans, a dramaturgical Boanerges, whose passion carried everything before him, and to whose imagination neither time nor space could set limits ; Williams, a marvellous power in giving form, shape, and vitality to abstract principles. The three formed a triumvirate of which any country or age might well feel proud of. John Elias and Christmas Evans were Calvinists. At one time they held very high views, but with age they became somewhat less rigid. Williams of Wern was at first a hyper-Calvinist, and said things which in after years he wondered at. He was probably influenced by the pen of John Roberts of Llanbrynmair, and later in life by the results of his own honest search for truth. He was in deeper sympathy with the doctrines of Wesleyan Methodism than his great contemporaries, and contended for tolerance where others would have withheld it. John Elias and Christmas Evans spent a great deal of time in Anglesey, and their influence upon the inhabitants contributed largely towards making it the most Calvinistic of Welsh counties.

Mr. Wesley passed through Anglesey to Ireland on several occasions, and was compelled to spend considerable time in the neighbourhood of Holyhead. The old sailing boats, without the business competition of the present day, were too slow for the founder of Methodism. On his first visit nothing special is recorded, which was on August 7, 1747. Returning from Ireland he called at Rhydyspaldyn, which was then occupied by Thomas Thomas. The family not knowing

English, Mr. Wesley, to his delight, was welcomed to the house of Mr. Morgan, a schoolmaster. In the month of February, on Wednesday the 24th, 1748, he came to Holyhead, and found all the ships on the other side, and in consequence he was delayed in the neighbourhood till the 8th March. On the Thursday and Friday evenings he preached in a room, which was crowded with decent and well-behaved people. On the second night the clergyman was rather agitated, and in a threatening attitude. Mr. Swindells, Mr. Wesley's companion, accompanied the minister to his lodgings, and the two had a friendly conversation. The clergyman's trouble was caused by the people leaving the church, and at Mr. Swindells's suggestion Mr. Wesley wrote *A Word to a Methodist*, which Mr. Ellis translated into Welsh. On the Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday evenings, Mr. Wesley preached to large congregations. The delay, however, was causing him considerable inconvenience, and the lame excuses made by the captains for not sailing created some annoyance, which he said put him in mind of an epigram—

‘There are, if rightly I methink,
Five causes why a man should drink,’

which, slightly altered, would just suit the occasion—

‘There are, unless my memory fail,
Five causes why we should not sail :
The fog is thick, the wind is high,
It rains, or may do by and by,
Or any other reason why.’

He called to see a Mr. Jones, an acquaintance of his brother, with a Mr. Holloway, an exciseman, who resolved to set out afresh. The frivolity of this man's wife had been a great hindrance to him, but she had been deeply wrought upon by a series of dreams and a flash of lightning, and both husband and wife appeared to be anxious about their souls. He also saw Mr. Morgan, the schoolmaster; and at Rhydys-pardyn, meeting with Peter Williams, they both preached, and many felt the power of God. They went on together and

preached at Llanddaniel ; and the next day at Rhydyspardin, probably a house which had been recorded as a preaching-place. At Llanfihangel, Mr. Wesley preached, Mr. Jones interpreting into Welsh, and the congregation was so wrought upon that their cries and tears continued long without intermission. The Sunday evening he preached at Llangors. During these days he stayed a part of the time at Trefollwyn with Mr. Jones, a relative of Captain Hampton Lewis of Henllys. The Monday evening he preached at Holyhead, there being many of the gentry present to hear him.

On April 12, 1749, Mr. Wesley came to Holyhead again, and writes, ‘All the ships were on the Irish side.’ On the Thursday and Friday evenings he preached to a number of poor people, who were deeply affected. On March 24, 1750, Mr. Wesley came to the house of Mr. Morgan, the school-master. The next day being Sunday, he preached in the house of Howell Thomas, Trefollwyn ; in the afternoon, at the house of William Pritchard, Clwchdyrnog, where the congregation was melted down. There seeming no probability of their being able to sail for Ireland, Mr. Wesley accepted the hospitality of Mr. Holloway, the exciseman, who was residing in a little, quiet, solitary spot, a retreat he most heartily desired, where no human voice was heard but that of the family. On the following Wednesday evening Mr. Wesley preached to a large congregation who were willing to hear, and at about eleven they went on board. It was a dark night, with much rain and high wind. When Mr. Wesley and Mr. Christopher Hopper retired from the deck, there was on the deck a Captain Griffiths of Carnarvonshire, whom Mr. Wesley describes as a clumsy, overgrown, hard-faced man, whose countenance resembled that of one of the ruffians in ‘Macbeth,’ which he had seen some thirty years before at Drury Lane. As Mr. Wesley was about to lie down, this man tumbled in, and he poured out such a volley of ribaldry, obscenity, and blasphemy, every second or third word

being an oath, as was scarce ever heard at Billingsgate. The boat was driven back by the storm, and they were obliged to wait on shore for a whole week before they could sail again for Dublin. Captain Griffiths, with a number of men, maddened with intoxicating drink, burst open the door of the house where Mr. Wesley was staying, struck old Robert Griffith the landlord, kicked his wife, and demanded the parson. The landlord slipped away quietly, removed Mr. Wesley to a more private room, and locked him in. The enraged captain followed, and broke open one or two doors, and while on a chair, looking on the top of the bed, he fell, hurt himself badly, and after a while with his troop walked away. Mr. Wesley went down and spent half an hour in prayer with a company of poor people. About nine o'clock, just when the family were preparing for bed, the house was beset again, the mad captain burst open the door, and was soon in the passage. Robert Griffith's daughter had a pail of water, and whether intentionally or from fright, she immersed the captain from head to foot. He cried as well as he could, 'Murder ! murder !' and stood still for a few moments. In the meantime Robert Griffith stepped by him and locked the door. He had thus lost his companions, and began to change the tone of his voice, and shouted, 'Let me out ! let me out !' After giving his word of honour not to interfere further, the door was opened, and he and his company went away.¹ On Sunday, April 1, Mr. Wesley went to a little church about seven miles away, and to the house of William Pritchard near Llanerchymedd, where he preached to a loving, simple people. Under considerable pressure Mr. Wesley went to Llanerchymedd with the intention of preaching, but he had scarce sat down when the 'sons of Belial' gathered together from all parts and compassed the house. Their oaths and curses, which were broad English, Mr. Wesley could understand. Contrary to the desire of the friends within, Mr.

¹ Wesley's *Journal*, vol. iii. pp. 178, 179.

Wesley decided to open the door and face the furious crowd and walk away, which Mr. Hopper and himself did, and they went on without any hindrance to the hospitable home of Mr. Holloway. The following Tuesday, in company with Mr. William Jones, Trefollwyn, he joined an exhorter who was addressing an attentive congregation, and when he had done Mr. Wesley preached. Staying at Llangefni, he spent considerable time in his study, preached three times near Llanerchymedd, and once at Trefollwyn, and on Saturday the 7th he sailed for Dublin.

On April 27, 1756, Mr. Wesley reached Holyhead again, and spent the Sunday in the town, where he preached two or three times during the day. He passed through on the return journey and on other occasions without staying at Holyhead. On Sunday, April 10, 1785, Mr. Wesley preached on board the *Clermont* packet, and while he was praying after the sermon for a speedy passage, the wind sprang up, and in twelve hours they reached Dublin Bay. He never preached in the neighbourhood again. Dr. Coke visited Holyhead several times, preached there, and also prepared for the press one part of his Commentary on the Bible. Mr. Griffith Owen of Porthaethwy was a friend of Dr. Coke, and he kindly received Messrs. Davies and Hughes on their first visit to the Mona Isle. On September 13, 1800, Messrs. Davies and Hughes parted, the latter for Amlwch, the former for Holyhead. Mr. Davies preached in the Calvinistic Methodist chapel an English sermon. Mr. John Bryan was the first Welsh Wesleyan preacher in Holyhead. He took his stand near the house of Ellen Bredy, probably in Stanley Street. Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) was the next Wesleyan preacher who proclaimed the gospel of free grace in this town. This was in 1802, and it is probable that the first Society was formed on this occasion. When the Society was invited to remain behind to an after-meeting, nineteen responded to the invitation. Ten of them, however, fell back, and the next

time they were visited nine only were found faithful. The few Wesleyans at first held their meetings in the house of William Roberts, Glanmorfa, the second house from The Feathers in Boston Street. They were so frequently disturbed here that they had to remove, and they found accommodation for a while in the house of Elizabeth Lewis, daughter of Shon Robert Lewis, the almanac maker. There was no peace in this place either. They tried the house of Thomas Powell, a short distance out of the town on the way to the present cemetery, but here again they were subject to the same fate. Many of those who had joined the Society were not walking circumspectly, and this was used against the new sect in a general sense. One man of some intelligence, who had assumed a position among the few Wesleyans without any change of heart, would carry his Common Prayer-book, out of which he would read prayers, contending that such was Mr. Wesley's custom, and while this was being done the disturbers would gather round the house and make a noise. The friends after this removed to a place called Parlyrau, but the preaching services were held chiefly in the open air. The great need of the Society was a class-leader. After struggling for some time without any one to look up to, a Mr. John Owen, a weaver, who had been connected with the Calvinistic Methodists, joined the Wesleyans, and became the first class-leader at Holyhead. In 1806 Mr. Robert Hughes, a brother of the Revs. Hugh and Griffith Hughes, who had been connected with the Society at Bettws, Abergele, removed to Holyhead to keep a school. He was a local preacher, and very soon was appointed class-leader, and became of great service to the church at Holyhead. In 1803 a site was secured on a rock near the sea on reasonable terms, greatly to the annoyance of some professedly good people. Some generous-hearted gentleman gave the stones for the erection of the chapel, and a firm of Liverpool timber merchants were also very sympathetic. Evan Roberts of Denbigh was the

builder, and the chapel was opened for divine worship in August 1808. Mr. Owen Davies went to Ireland and elsewhere, and he succeeded in collecting £200 towards the Holyhead Chapel. The work continued to prosper for some years after the erection of the new chapel. The Society, however, was unfortunate in some of its members, who were not living the life of purity which was expected of believers in Christian perfection. Robert Hughes left them, and others went away, leaving the Society under a cloud. In 1823 Mr. Owen Thomas, who had been in the ministry for about fourteen years, retired from the itinerancy, and settled in business at Holyhead, where he continued preaching and filling other offices with zeal and diligence up to the time of his death. Owen Thomas was an eminent musician, and, like his relatives at Portdinorwic and Zion, rendered great service to Methodism in those years of struggle. When the breakwater in the Holyhead harbour was made, the population greatly increased, the chapel became too small, and there was great need of additional accommodation. There was a debt of £350 on the old chapel; the trustees, however, at a cost of £700, enlarged the chapel and increased their debt to something more than a thousand pounds. The chapel was opened for divine worship, May 1848, and the membership and congregation considerably increased. The trustees undertook considerable responsibility in connection with the erection of Llaingoch, notwithstanding the heavy debt which rested upon their own chapel. In 1856 they made an effort to reduce their debt; a new trust was formed, and Owen Pritchard, ironmonger; Owen Thomas, builder; Thomas Evans, Tynewydd; Thomas Evans, pork butcher; Owen Roberts, tea dealer; David Pritchard, Customs; Thomas Williams, letter-carrier; William Jones, tailor and draper; Richard Lewis, Customs; John Roberts, joined the trustees. The Society was now active, numerous, and influential. In 1859 Holyhead became the head of a

Circuit. The chapel became too small, and the need of accommodation was felt more keenly year after year. The Rev. Richard Williams made a bold attempt at reducing the debt, and succeeded to a certain extent. During the ministry of the Rev. John Pierce, after a hard and long struggle, additional land was secured to enlarge the chapel. August 12, 13, and 14, the chapel was again reopened, the Rev. Thomas Aubrey John Jones (c), Dr. William Davies, and John Evans (b) being the preachers on the occasion. The chapel was then considered one of the largest and best in the Welsh work, but it has again been replaced by a better and more commodious one, which was erected during the ministry of the Rev. Edward Humphreys, when the generosity of the Holyhead Methodists far exceeded that of any previous effort in the history of this church.

The Holyhead Wesleyans can rejoice in names that are sacred and memorable. Plain William Jones, 'the ostler'; Owen Williams, Glanymor—powerful in prayer; John Jones, the mason; William Jones and his wife Grace, were class-leaders who loved the work for the Master's sake. Owen Ellis was an intelligent and useful local preacher and worker; William Thomas, the saddler, was prominent in his willingness to work, to do or to be for Christ; as was also William Hughes, 'Refail Bach,' who joined the Methodist Society the day the first chapel was opened in 1808. He was parish clerk, a position he was invited to accept by Lady Stanley of Penrhos, and which he held for sixty years. He was connected with the Wesleyan Society for seventy-three years; a man possessing considerable originality of character, who lived a pure and beautiful life, and died blessing and being blessed by a host of friends and relatives gathered around him. John Owen, who went out as missionary to Newfoundland in 1814, was one of the children of this church. Hugh Hughes, son of Mr. Hughes, The Bank, was a local preacher. John Jones, a young man of considerable

promise, who was called to a better world before the full opening of the flower; Evan Williams (Cawrdaf), and Thomas Thomas (b), who entered the ministry in 1865, grandson of Hughes, 'Refail Bach'—also deserve more than passing notice. More recently the Society has had a goodly number of influential families connected with it, and several able class-leaders, including William Jones, William Owen, William Jones (2nd), Owen Thomas, Owen Roberts, John Roberts, John Hughes, William Griffiths, William Williams, and J. M. Pritchard, son of the Rev. Richard Pritchard, and other good men.

Mr. Wesley had friends in the neighbourhood of Holyhead, but they never formed a Wesleyan Society. In 1830 the Carnarvon English Circuit was formed, which included the county of Anglesey. With the development of Holyhead, and the increase in the English population, the English Society gathered strength. In 1842 it was made the head of a Circuit; the Rev. Joseph Sykes was appointed its first superintendent. A fairly good chapel was erected in Cross Street. The Society and congregation have grown slowly; considering the scarcity of the English-speaking population, it could not be otherwise; but it has continued to grow, and probably will make greater progress as the years go on.

Beaumaris is a name which is said to mean 'pleasant situation in low ground near the sea.' Whether that be the true signification of the word or not, it is a true description of the position of the town. The word may mean *buw*, a cow; *mor*, the sea; and *is* low; signifying low place of cows by the sea. Or it may mean *bis*, twice, and *maris*, the sea, with reference to its position between two seas. Or it may mean *beau*, beautiful, fine; *maree*, sea, i.e. the beautiful sea. All these and other interpretations may be given, all descriptive of some aspect of this charming spot. The drive from Bangor to Beaumaris is one of the most picturesque

in Wales, while there is a stately dignity about the county town of Anglesey which adds considerably to its attractiveness in the eyes of a large number of visitors. Mr. John Hughes and Mr. Owen Davies set out together for Anglesey. The last named went to Porthaethwy, where they met the following day, September 11, 1800,¹ and Mr. Hughes to Beaumaris, and was kindly received by a Mr. Richard Thomas, the leader with the Calvinistic Methodists. Richard Thomas was a joiner, and was fitting up a shop for a Mr. Richard Lloyd, in which it was arranged to hold the service next day. About two hundred people attentively listened to the Wesleyan preacher while he expounded Col. i. 13, partly in English and partly in Welsh, R. Thomas giving out a Welsh hymn, which was very heartily sung. In the month of June 1802 Messrs. Jones (Bathafarn) and Bryan came to Beaumaris, and the Mayor granted them permission to preach in the Town Hall. The town-crier was sent out, but this important officer was not in love with the Wesleyans. But his cold, unusual way of calling the attention of the public served to arouse the inquisitiveness of many of the people, and a very large company came to the service. The preachers began to sing, and at once they arrested the attention of the people. Two young women living at Bulkeley Place, near the castle, were attending to their domestic duties when they heard exquisite singing, the like of which they had never heard before. ‘It must be that angels are in the air,’ said they. Looking out through the window they saw crowds of people going towards the hall; so these women left their work and followed the crowd. They heard the two preachers, one of them was converted and afterwards married one of the leading men in connection with Methodism in the town. Others, too, were converted at that service. In 1803 Jones (Bathafarn) visited Beaumaris, but as Lord Bulkeley declined to grant him the use

¹ ‘Life of John Hughes’; *Eurgrawn*, 1841, pp. 131, 132.

of the hall, he was glad to have the consent of Mr. Thomas Hughes, Henblas, to preach in his house. There was a large room in connection with Henblas in which the Society was formed. John Maurice preached there some time after this, and when he called the Society to remain behind, not one would leave the room. He invited some one to pray. Betti Roberts went on her knees, and said the Lord's Prayer. Mr. John Hughes says that they had a strong Society in the town, but not having a place convenient in which to worship, it lacked order and unity. Mr. John Jones, Corwen, did much towards organizing this Society. Mr. Edward Davies, one of the first to join, was appointed class-leader; Thomas Hughes, Henblas, joined about the same time, and both worked well together, and died within a short time of each other, to the great loss of the Society, in 1809. Richard Pritchard, a gardener, became class-leader, the duties of which office he discharged with zeal up to the time of his death in 1824. William Rowlands, Martha Hughes, Elizabeth Jones, Rotten Row, who entertained the preachers with such genuine hospitality that all preachers were happy and blessed under her roof; Thomas Williams, Morris Williams, Hugh Jones, painter, who was a class-leader for twenty years, and died May 31, 1827,—all these were among the first Wesleyan Methodists in this Society. In 1804 Beaumaris was made the head of the Anglesey Circuit, and Mr. John Jones, Corwen, the first superintendent. An old malt-house was secured in which to hold the services. One difficulty was that of securing a site in a convenient place in the town, but this was overcome at considerable cost by the purchase of some cottages in the centre of the town, and the chapel was opened for divine worship, August 26, 1808. The preachers who took part in the services, which were so largely attended that overflow meetings were held in the open air, were Messrs. John Maurice, John Rogers, John Jones (1st), Lot Hughes, William Jones (Llanelidan), and

others. With the new chapel came prosperity, the Society became one of the strong centres of the District, amongst the most prominent workers being James Rogers, who was a good musician, active with Sunday-school work, and a steward and leader in the church, and of great influence in the town. Hugh Jones, the painter, was chiefly instrumental in purchasing the site ; his son, Dr. Jones, and daughter, the wife of James Rogers, were very active and promising workers, but their lives were cut short by death. The debt on the chapel was a heavy burden, and the trustees were frequently obliged to seek the sympathy of the chapel fund to pay the interest. Mr. T. Owen, stamp office, rendered very valuable service in connection with a scheme which was started in the Circuit towards reducing the debt on all the chapels. The friends had long felt the need of a new chapel, but could not undertake the financial responsibility. During the superintendency of Dr. William Davies, the effort was successfully undertaken, and on Sunday and Monday, December 11 and 12, 1859, the new chapel was dedicated to the worship of God. At the opening service the true spirit of the Evangelical Alliance was beautifully illustrated. The Calvinistic Methodists gave the services of the day—collection, preacher, congregation and all—to the Wesleyans. The Congregationalists did the same ; the Rev. T. Aubrey preaching in the Calvinistic chapel at night, Samuel Davies and Lewis Jones taking the services the second day. The generosity of Mr. T. Owen, Miss Griffith, J. Pritchard, W. Thomas, John Jones, Robert Jones, and William Jones, and the hearty co-operation of the members generally, were crowned with success.

Beaumaris has been more successful than some towns in training preachers of the gospel. The names include William Jones, who entered the ministry in 1808, but retired in 1814, though he continued a local preacher the whole of his life, and for years resided at Chester. There were also Benjamin Roberts, who entered the ministry in 1839, and

died at Chester, February 18, 1866, was appointed book steward in 1849, and filled important offices in the District, and was a good preacher, concise, practical, and scriptural ; and John Hughes (2nd), who entered the ministry in 1850, and died at Carnarvon, November 21, 1886, aged sixty-five —a good man, greatly beloved, an interesting and evangelical preacher. Joseph Jones, Hugh Jones, William Hughes, William Williams, and R. Jones laboured long and well as local preachers. For some years Beaumaris Circuit suffered much from emigration, the sparsity of the population, and the steady removal of the young people of promise ; but more recently it is putting on its strength again, and a brighter future is naturally anticipated.

The Rev. Thomas Morgan, Dowlais, writes of Amlwch : ‘Several names in the district point to the probability that bloody battles were waged here in ancient times, such as *cadle*, battle-place ; *cerryg-y-llefau*, stones of weeping ; *Rhy-y-galan-astra*, the ford of massacre.’ Hence he assumes that the meaning of the name is *Aml-och*, ‘a place of many groans,’ for groans and weeping are universally the concomitants of bloodshed and war. When Messrs. Owen Davies and John Hughes had seen Mr. Griffith Owen, the friend of Dr. Coke, he advised them to go, one to Holyhead, the other to Amlwch ; and on September 13, 1800, Mr. Hughes reached the latter town. At Llangefni he met Christmas Evans, who, after asking him several questions, wished him success in his work. On his way to the town he met the Rev. John Evans, an eminent Congregational minister, who invited him to partake of his hospitality, and offered to assist him in any manner possible. Mr. Hughes had been directed to see a Mr. Robert Jones, the deacon of the Calvinistic Methodists in the town, and after consultation with Mr. Jones and Mr. Evans, it was arranged that Mr. Hughes should preach in the Calvinistic Methodist chapel in the afternoon and in the Congregational chapel in the evening. This arrangement

was carried out on the Sunday, Mr. Hughes preaching in English both times, and before the celebrated John Elias in the afternoon. In 1802 Messrs. Bryan and John Maurice came to Amlwch, and seeing a funeral, joined in the procession, and afterwards taking their stand in the street improved the occasion, Mr. Bryan very vividly and forcibly describing the death of the ungodly. The effect was overpowering; the crowd was soon in tears, and many were on their knees crying for mercy. This service made a great impression in and about the town, and is talked of by old people up to the present time. After this service, however, the preachers found more difficulty in obtaining a place in which to conduct services. When Mr. John Maurice came to Amlwch the next time, he was allowed to preach in the old loft of the Clay Mill near the port, and a large company of people assembled. The agent had given instructions to his workmen to see that pillars sufficiently strong to hold up the loft were put in position. Whether the men failed in their duty, or others came and removed some of the props, is not known, but when Mr. Maurice was half-way through his sermon, the loft gave way and a scene of great commotion followed. Fortunately, no great harm was done, and Mr. Maurice finished his sermon in the open air. In August 1803 Mr. Hughes came to Amlwch again, and this time he was left to himself. The contrast deeply impressed him. When preaching English, which the people could not understand, he was welcome even to the same pulpit as John Elias, but when about to preach in Welsh, there was no one to welcome him. After some time he had the consent of a Mr. Richard Williams, who had been a member with the Baptists, to stand near his house to preach. Richard Williams, however, remembered that the house of his brother-in-law had for some time been recorded for the use of the Baptists. That house was secured, and it was in that humble place the first Methodist Society was formed. The

first to identify themselves with the Wesleyans were Thomas Genor, Abraham Bothom, William Roberts and his wife Catherine. After a time they removed the meeting-place to Pontyfelinhen, in the Rhos. Catherine Roberts was over sixty years of age and could not read a word, but after identifying herself with the Society she began to learn, and soon mastered it sufficiently to become very useful in the Sunday school. Soon afterwards William Williams, Hugh Edmunds, Careg Gurnach; John Jones, Tanyfynwent; John Jones, Craosau; Martha Jones, Braddas; Moses Jones and his wife; Mrs. Marshall, and Mrs. Hughes, wife of Captain Hughes, were added to those previously mentioned. The place of worship, which was known as the 'Narrow Chapel,' had been two cottages with the partition taken down, and was in a very low, almost repulsive locality. In 1806 they made an effort to secure a site, and in the following year a good substantial chapel was erected in a prominent position, Messrs. Owen Davies, Bryan, D. Rogers, and William Jones, Llanelidan, being the preachers on that important occasion. The trustees were Messrs. John Paynter (Maesllwyn), Owen Williams, John Davies, Edward Edwards, John Parry, R. Broadhead, S. Marshall, Richard Edwards, and Captain Hughes. In this list there are influential names, which suggest that notwithstanding many disadvantages Wesleyan Methodism had taken hold of some of the leading men in the locality. The services at the opening of the chapel were specially owned from on high. David Rogers, preaching on 'Jacob's Ladder,' had a powerful influence on the congregation, and he himself was quite carried away by the subject. He vividly described the angels ascending the ladder carrying the tidings of a sinner repenting, and while portraying the angel on his grand mission in a powerful and effective manner, Mr. Rogers cried out, 'Stop, Gabriel, there is another sinner coming to Christ.' A voice in the congregation cried out, 'Diolch byth!' ('Thank Him for ever!'). 'There are two

here,' replied the preacher. 'Bendigedig!' responded the people. 'Wait, wait, Gabriel, there are three here,' said Mr. Rogers. The response, 'Bendigedig!' ('Blessed be God!'), was heard from many in the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the sanctuary. With a new chapel and a number of pious and active members, prosperity naturally followed. The discussions about Wesleyan doctrines were widely attracting attention. Christmas Evans published a pamphlet called *Mene Tekel*, in which he made remarks that were considered unfair about Mr. Wesley. A Mr. John Pritchard put some lines of poetry together largely misrepresenting Methodist doctrine. Another bard endeavoured to ridicule Mr. Bryan, which Martha Jones, a member of the Wesleyan Society, answered in some lines of similar type. The friends thought she had the best of it, but the productions were all of a low character. They had their day and are gone, and the incident would not be worth recalling if it were not that the work of God was for a time injured by this wrangling. Mrs. Paynter identified herself with the Methodists, and Maesllwyn became one of the most comfortable Methodist homes for preachers in the Principality. In 1812 Mr. James Treweek, a good Cornish local preacher, came to Amlwch to manage the copper mines in the neighbourhood. He became an active Sunday-school superintendent, learned the Welsh language, and assisted in every branch of work. He was chiefly instrumental in the formation of the English Society in this town, and died in peace in 1850. The chapel was well filled and frequently crowded; but the need of a larger one was widely felt, and during the ministry of the Rev. Robert Jones (B) a much larger and better edifice was erected. This was dedicated to the worship of God on Easter Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday 1860, Thomas Aubrey, William Powell, and Samuel Davies being the preachers. Many changes had taken place since the first chapel had been erected. The old people had passed away, but there were.

others who were able to take their offices. Messrs. J. Wynne Paynter, W. Cox Paynter, Richard Lewis, J. Williams, with Captains W. Williams, R. Lewis, W. Owen and R. Owen became the trustees, and the debt was not allowed to hinder the work.

Amlwch has been the nursery of several ministers of the gospel. William Owen, who entered the ministry in 1835, and died at Chester, April 17, 1860, was a very superior preacher of the gospel. He was more highly cultured than many of his brethren—a man of considerable ability, a good pulpit orator, with a tenderness of heart which made his ministry very attractive. His death, at the age of forty-eight, was a great loss to the church. John Jones (2nd), to whom reference is made in another chapter, was a native of Amlwch, as was also William Evans, who died at Machynlleth in 1854. William Evans (A), who entered the ministry in 1859, and is still in the active work, generally known as Monwyson, is one of the most thoughtful preachers in the Welsh pulpit, and editor of the *Philosopher*, a Welsh periodical of high merit. Robert Curry, who entered the ministry in 1872, and his brother Hugh Curry, who became a travelling preacher in 1875, and Hugh Evans, who recently entered the ministry, all hail from Amlwch. Messrs. W. Griffiths, William Williams, Joseph Edwards, D. Hughes, W. Hughes (Madyn), W. Hughes (Bank), W. Owen, R. Williams, and T. Williams were local preachers connected with this church. Mr. J. W. Paynter, a county magistrate, high sheriff, etc., when a boy of fourteen summers, in the hand of Captain Charles Roose, went to a class-meeting, and up to the time of his death, at the age of sixty-eight, on July 10, 1882, was one of the most intelligent, exemplary, and devoted Methodists in the country, class-leader, steward, Sunday-school worker, a generous supporter of every good work, and in connection with every office his transparent sincerity was beautifully

exemplified. His brother, C. Paynter, who died December 5, 1883, was for many years a constant supporter of every branch of Christian work, especially at Amlwch. Mr. R. Williams and David Pritchard were very active and devoted men, who will ever live in the memory and religious life of the Wesleyan Society at Amlwch.

Aberffraw, which means ‘the estuary of the swift river,’ is a town in which Wesleyan Methodism has had a good hold for many years. Mr. John Hughes was the first Wesleyan minister to visit this place. He took his stand near the Prince Llewelyn Inn on a Saturday evening in October 1802, when he preached to a good congregation. The following Sunday morning he preached again to five or six hundred people, and was greatly encouraged with the result. It is probable that the Society was formed on that occasion, as in the following December, at the quarterly meeting held at Denbigh, there was reported as members on trial at Aberffraw the large number of seventy.¹ Among the first members of this Society may be mentioned Richard Owen, the weaver; David Williams, ‘The Shop’; Richard Morris; Anne Williams, Caemawr; Ellen Williams, Cefngwyn; Elizabeth Jones, Tyddyn-crythor; Mr. P. Pritchard, Treiddon; Owen Roberts, Tygwyn, and his wife; Margaret Edwards. David Williams, ‘The Shop,’ was appointed the first leader. Mr. John Hughes says they worshipped in an old barn, and Mr. Lot Hughes mentions the Tygwyn as the place where the Society met. Mr. Thomas Templeton, who was living at Trefdraeth, rendered efficient service as leader, and he and Samuel Ogden were the first stewards of the Carnarvon Circuit. The membership increased rapidly to more than a hundred, but some of the members were subject to considerable persecution. Anne Hughes of Glanllynbach had become a member, greatly to the annoyance of her husband, who endeavoured in vain to prevent her having anything to do with the Methodists. He

¹ ‘Biography of Owen Davies,’ by John Hughes; *Eurgrawn*, 1832, p. 332.

became so bitter that he went to hear one of the Wesleyan preachers, having stones in his pocket and a determination in his heart to throw these stones at the preacher. But John Maurice, a most powerful minister, took for his text, ‘O wretched man that I am!’ etc. The truth took hold of Hughes’s heart. As the discourse proceeded, he dropped the stones one after another, then the tears came running down his cheeks, then he cried aloud for mercy, and in that meeting surrendered his heart to Christ. He became a faithful and consistent Christian, and his family after him were all zealous Wesleyans.

In 1806, during the superintendency of the Rev. William Batten, a small chapel was erected. The Society had suffered in various ways, and was in a very feeble state. When William Thomas, saddler, came to reside at Aberffraw in 1814, there were only about fifteen members of Society, and though an active class-leader, he was not privileged to see great prosperity during his residence in that town. The agitation of 1830, referred to elsewhere, had its head-centre in Anglesey, and the agitators made a desperate struggle to capture the Aberffraw Chapel. Mr. William Jones, supported by Jones, Ty-pigyn; Williams, Cellar; David and Richard Williams, continued stedfast and unmovable, and the attempt was in vain. Mrs. Susanna Williams, to whom reference has been made in connection with Harlech, came to Tyddyn-hurdd, and her presence was made a great blessing to the Methodist Society. She won the family, which was a large and influential one, representing several large farms, to Wesleyan Methodism. Tyddyn-hurdd, Cellar, Trefriw, and Penrhyn became preachers’ homes, and one branch of the family after another joined the Methodist Society. In 1833 the friends were blessed with a great work of grace, the result of which was a considerable increase of membership. William Williams, Cellar; J. Morris, Penrhyn; S. Williams, The Mill, joined the church, and they saw many others seek-

ing a place with God's people. In 1851 a new chapel was erected and settled on the model deed. Messrs. J. Williams, Tyddyn-hurdd; D. Williams, Trefriw; W. Jones, Plascoch; Henry W. Wynne, and Robert Roberts, with the afore-named gentlemen, became the trustees. The chapel and Society were soon in a flourishing state. The old members had passed away; some of them without witnessing much prosperity; some of them had seen the dawn of better things, but only a few were there to see the brighter days. Mrs. Williams, Tynllwydan, who had been very helpful in the darkest days, had long passed to the skies, but her son and family were found faithful. John Jones (Frwd-win), R. Williams, and Thomas Morris became preachers. The last named entered the ministry in 1841, and died at Denbigh, April 30, 1888, aged seventy-seven. Mr. Morris had a strong will, cultivated mind, a good voice, was a fluent speaker, and delivered his sermons with freedom and fervour, and his ministry was highly successful in turning many to righteousness. Just before his death he said, 'I want to go home.' R. Pritchard and H. W. Wynne were brought up in this church, and were very acceptable local preachers. When Holyhead became the head of a Circuit, the second minister was stationed at Aberffraw. In recent years Messrs. W. Williams, J. Morris, W. Jones, and E. Williams have rendered very efficient services as class-leaders. There is now a beautiful chapel and a prosperous church, which is more than holding its own.

Llangefni derives its name from the river which runs through the town—*Cefni*, and is probably a contraction of *Cefn-llif*, 'great' or 'high flood.' Mr. Wesley refers to this town, near to which is Rhydyspardin, and several churches and places visited by him, as previously described in this chapter. Mr. John Hughes during his first visit to Anglesey,¹ probably preached in the Calvinistic Methodist chapel in this

¹ 'Biography of Owen Davies,' by John Hughes; *Eurgrawn*, 1832, p. 289.

town. In 1802 Mr. Bryan preached at Bodffordd, near Llangefni. Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) was the next Wesleyan preacher who visited this town. He found the congregation too large for the loft of the Bull Inn, where he intended preaching, and took his stand in the open air. While Mr. Jones was earnestly supplicating the throne of grace, a 'gentleman' took firm hold of him and dragged him into an inner room of an inn and shut him up, and then informed him that he would have to pay a fine of forty shillings or be sent to Beaumaris gaol. Mr. Jones was calm, dignified, and self-possessed, and his manner so firm and respectful, that the persecutor ultimately said he would let the preacher free if he would leave Anglesey and never come to disturb their peace any more. 'If you will promise to bind Satan, and that the people of Anglesey sin no more, I will accept your offer, but not otherwise,' replied Mr. Jones. On this he was taken before a drinking parson, who was sitting in the public-house with his glass of grog before him. The parson began to assume a great deal, but he soon felt that he had before him a man of God, who was conscious of the presence of the King of kings. The publican, whose name was Lloyd, remonstrated with the parson. The Mr. Evans who had acted the brute began to be disgusted with himself, the parson, and the whole affair. So he suddenly looked up in the face of Mr. Jones, said to him, 'You are a good man,' and took him away. The man who had done this had buried his father and brother only three days before, and he himself was taken ill, and was shortly in his grave. This incident did more towards popularising the preacher than his sermon would have done. Wesleyan Methodism attracted attention and won the hearts of many. Its progress, however, drew persecution from those who had professed to be friends; amongst others, one man, who had been converted and become a Wesleyan, was prompted, harassed by his wife in every possible way till his life was almost unbearable, and

the means adopted were a disgrace to the civilization of the country, and especially to those who had prompted the wife to harass her husband as she did.¹ Christmas Evans, who in those days was a hyper-Calvinist, said things in the pulpit and through the press that were very unworthy of so good a man. Not satisfied with calling them ‘false prophets,’ ‘wolves in sheep’s clothing,’ telling the people to avoid them as lepers, he said they were all going to the flames of hell, and so would all those who were deceived to join them. Many of the people were frightened, and others disheartened, while some put on new strength and courage. The services were held at Bodffordd, but after the death of John Pritchard were removed to Llangefni. In the midst of opposition there were a few holding on zealously. Amongst these were Owen Williams and his daughter, Ellis Griffith, Jannett Edwards and her daughter Margaret, Gaenor Williams of Hendre. In 1810 a site was secured from Mr. Lloyd, The Mill, and a good chapel erected. Mr. T. Templeton removed to Llangefni, and was a great help to the work there; his wife, who died at Holywell, was a very devoted Christian. Grace Jones was a very devoted and zealous Methodist, and her name is still held in high respect. Owen Evans, who entered the ministry in 1853 and died at Llanrwst, October 19, 1864, and William Thomas, who became a travelling preacher in 1859, and is a brother greatly beloved, and is still successfully engaged in the work, came from this church. Mr. Owen Evans was a very acceptable preacher of undoubted piety, and promised to be very useful, when he was cut down so unexpectedly. Isaac Jones and W. Morris rendered good service as class-leaders, and for some time Mr. W. Thomas has done much work as a local preacher.

Newbwrch (Newborough) was first visited by Mr. John Hughes in the month of October 1802. He had preached to a large company at Aberffraw in the morning, and when

¹ The good man died shortly after in great peace; *vide Eur.*, 1861, p. 416.

he came to Newbwrch he found an even larger congregation, many of whom had become almost impatient waiting his arrival. Messrs. Bryan and Maurice visited the place shortly after, and at the following December quarterly meeting there were twelve members on trial. Mr. Hugh Owen, Rhyddgar, was one of the first to identify himself with the Society there. Hugh Williams, Ddwyrain, was the first class-leader. Thomas Owen, son of Hugh Owen; Thomas Hughes, Rhedyn Coch, and his wife; Jane Jones, Jane Lloyd, and Jane Owen, Robert Morris, Robert Williamson, Bardd-du-Mon, were amongst the early Methodists who joined this Society. In 1804 a small chapel was erected at Newbwrch, the first in Anglesey; it was considered a fairly good chapel in those days. The population is small, but in connection with this Society there were some noble Christian women who continued loyal and fearless supporters of Methodism under constant persecution, and Thomas Owen became an efficient local preacher.

The pioneers of Methodism visited Llanfair-Pwll-Gwingyll (St. Mary's Church, near the white hazel pool) on this wise. There were two neighbours living at Llanfair who had heard of the Wesleyan preachers at Beaumaris and Carnarvon, and who sent a request that they should come and preach in this village on the Menai. Mr. Bryan accepted the invitation, and in the year 1802 he conducted service in the open air, taking his stand near the house of Lewis Jones, Rhosygath, preaching to a goodly company. The next time he visited Llanfair he took his stand near the monument of the Marquis of Anglesey, where he preached with great power to a large crowd of people. Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) also visited the place, as well as John Maurice, John Jones (Corwen), and others. Captain M'Kenzie was the first to join the Society, and for about three years all the meetings were held in his house. Griffith Williams (Caeclyd) and Lewis Jones were the two men who invited the Methodist preachers, and they both joined

'the people called Methodists.' David Williams, Siglan, his wife and daughter; Owen Hughes, Fron; Ellen Williams; Richard and Ellen Roberts, Pwllfanog; R. Evans, Castell Penmynydd; Captain Thomas and his wife, Cichele-Cadnant; Owen Williams, Jane Hughes, William Williams and his wife, and others, cast in their lot with the new sect. In 1805 Richard Roberts and Captain M'Kenzie at their own cost erected a chapel. The opening services were conducted by Messrs. Bryan, Maurice, D. Rogers, Batten, Davies (Africa), and William Jones (Llanelidan). It was a great day, and great good was done. On New Year's Day 1806 William Davies (Africa) was preaching in the Llanfair Chapel; the day was one of high glee among the young and sporting section of the community. There were two young men who were great friends, who took a prominent part in all the dancing and mirth of the 'Wake,' and they had arranged to be present with two young ladies to take an active share in the performances. One of them did not make his appearance, the other felt uneasy. The next day he was told that his friend had gone to hear the Wesleyan preacher, and that he and his brother had that night joined the Society. The next Sunday the man went to the Wesleyan chapel, and to his great amazement his old companion John Williams was able to engage in prayer. The two brothers who had decided to follow Christ on that night were none other than the Revs. David Williams and John Williams (2nd). Shortly afterwards their old companion identified himself with the Wesleyans, and he also became a very able local preacher, and will long be remembered as John Jones of Toxteth Park, Liverpool. The two brothers had stayed to the after-meeting without knowing anything of each other's presence. They began to devote their services most assiduously to the service of Christ, held prayer-meetings in cottages, and went about from place to place, and their efforts were greatly owned of God. The Society was in a prosperous state. The two

brothers entered the ministry, John in 1809 and David in 1810 ; their record is described in another chapter. John Jones and O. Hughes had begun to preach, and were doing good work in the Circuit. In 1832 the future Queen of England, then Princess Victoria, accompanied by the Duchess of Kent, were on a visit to the Marquis of Anglesey. Her Royal Highness was very homely among the people, driving about freely and frequently, and she soon won her way to the hearts of the people. John Jones, the Methodist local preacher, was a tailor, and possibly the only one in the village. On a Saturday a message was sent commanding him to the palace of the Marquis. Jones was very nervous, but made his appearance at the entrance, and inquired for the Lord Chamberlain, but he was told that the Lord Chamberlain did not accompany the Duchess and the young Princess, and failing to gain admission he returned home. The next morning he was again summoned to go at once to the palace ; but Jones, who had discovered what he was expected to do, sent word with the messenger saying, 'I cannot come, I am going to chapel.' At midday a messenger came again, to which Jones replied, 'You say that I cannot come, that I have to go and preach this afternoon at Traethcoch.' The next morning he was sent for again, and the Methodist local preacher obeyed at once. The house steward looked upon him with wrath and indignation, and asked in bitter tones, 'John Jones, where were you yesterday ?' 'I was in the Gorswen Chapel in the morning, and preaching at Traethcoch afternoon and evening,' said Jones. 'Chapel indeed ! Preaching indeed ! Did you not know that there was a job for you, and that Her Royal Highness the Princess Victoria wanted you to come and do it ?' 'Yes,' said John Jones, 'but I never work on Sunday.' 'Never work on Sunday ?' said the house steward. 'No, sir,' responded the good Methodist. 'I never have worked on Sunday, and I never intend doing so to please anybody.'

‘What! you decline to do a little job for the future Queen of England?’ asked the astonished house steward. ‘Well, sir,’ replied the local preacher, ‘I am only a poor tailor at Llanfair, but I expect to be a king in the other world, and I prefer losing the favour of princes here than to lose my crown hereafter.’ This reply settled the matter, the steward began to smile, the job was given to Jones, and he was afterwards told by the house steward that the Duchess and the Princess were so pleased with his conduct that if at any time they could bestow upon him any favour it would give them pleasure to do so. The incident made a good impression upon the inhabitants generally, and Wesleyan Methodism prospered. There was a feeling which possessed many of the members that the chapel was not in a sufficiently central position, and that it was too near the Calvinistic Methodist place of worship. In 1839 there was some disagreement among the Calvinists, and a section left and were determined to build a chapel of their own, but they got to know about the desire on the part of the Wesleyans to remove to another site, and offered to buy their chapel. Believing that there would be no difficulty in getting a central site, the Wesleyans sold the old chapel. But they were for some time unable to get a site, and were compelled to worship in cottages. Failing to secure a site, they began to lose heart, and their strength gave way, and the possibility of giving up the cause became a serious problem. John Jones determined to bring the matter before the throne of grace, and to ask God to show him what to do, and to reveal His will in a verse of Scripture. Jones opened his Bible, and placed his finger, perfectly resigned to the divine answer whichever way it went. His finger fell on 1 Chron. xxviii. 10 : ‘Take heed now; for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it.’ That was enough; Jones went home, told his wife to tell the friends that a site had been promised. The next day he met with Mr. Roberts, Garneddwen, a

Calvinistic Methodist, who asked John Jones if a site had yet been secured for a chapel. ‘Yes,’ said John Jones. ‘Who has promised it?’ queried Mr. Roberts; ‘was it the Marquis?’ ‘No,’ said the sturdy Wesleyan, ‘some one greater than the Marquis.’ ‘Who is that?’ asked the good Calvinist. John Jones replied by telling all that had happened the previous day, and said with the divine promise the site would soon be given them. The childlike faith of the Methodist local preacher so impressed Mr. Roberts that he melted into tears, and said that he would give them a site by the side of the main road, and also help in other ways. The clouds disappeared, the chapel was erected, and the efforts of the people were greatly blessed. In 1852 Mr. Thomas Davies, Garneddwen, made a generous offer to pay half the remaining debt if the friends would raise the other half, and by the help of the Anglesey Special Chapel Fund the debt was paid off. Owen Hughes, John Jones, Samuel Jones, and William Owen were the trustees. The first-named and H. Meanly were for many years faithful class-leaders. Llanfair has been the home of good Methodists, and their fidelity to the King of kings will surely secure for them the crown of life.

Shortly after John Jones began to preach he was invited to visit the Borth, which he did. His friend Owen Hughes and others followed, preaching in cottages. The house of Hugh Rowlands known as Cadnant, and that of John Roberts called Bryniau-duon, and also the house of Thomas Blackwell, Borth, were the places of meeting. The few Wesleyans who met together were considered as really belonging to Llanfair Society, but they began to long for a chapel of their own. This desire was not accomplished till the year 1836, when the chapel called Pen Nebo was erected. John Roberts, Bryniau-duon, was appointed a class-leader, and up to the time of his death was a faithful labourer in the vineyard. He died in the faith, without realizing the joy of seeing the chapel erected.

Evan Parry was a diligent and zealous class-leader, and was succeeded by his son-in-law Thomas Hughes, who did well for his church up to the time of his death in December 1857. He was very desirous of seeing a second new chapel, and talked, planned, and worked in order to secure it, but was called away to a better world before his desires were realized. In 1859 the chapel, which had become too small, was enlarged. Dr. William Davies, who was then the superintendent of the Circuit, entered heartily into the scheme, and saw it successfully carried through. There were several active and good people connected with the Society at this time. William Ellis, Edward Gray, John Williams, John Rowlands, Rees Williams, William Owen, Owen Hughes, Thomas Owen, and William Owen became the trustees. The old class-leaders had now passed away, but John Roberts and Rees Williams were worthy successors of them. In recent years the population has grown, and the Wesleyan Society considerably increased in strength. John Hughes continued a zealous preacher of the gospel. Rowland Jones of Mona House, whose early death in November 1881 was a great loss, worked so hard and well with every branch of work in this Society, that his name will long be remembered. He was incessant in his labours, teaching the Band of Hope to sing, presiding at the organ, working in the Sunday school, the leaders' meeting, Circuit steward, and in everything untiring in his zeal to serve the King. His early death was a great loss to the church.

Elim, in the parish of Trefdraeth, was visited by John Maurice in the year 1802, when he preached in a farmhouse called Ty-mawr. The following year John Jones (Corwen) visited the locality, and Mr. Thomas Templeman was led to give his heart to the Saviour, and probably a Society was formed. In 1804 a chapel was erected on land held under life lease. The person died ere long; the friends approached the agent, who told the trustees distinctly that on no con-

sideration could they have the chapel ; he would convert it into a tithe barn. They were sadly disappointed at the result of this reply, and determined to approach the land-owner himself, and to their great satisfaction Colonel Hughes himself told them that they should have the chapel for the nominal rent of five shillings a year. The steward became enraged, breathed out threatenings, and did his best to injure the good people, but his life was cut short, and his end was literally like that of Herod, most miserable and painful. The Methodist Society prospered, and in 1837 additional land was secured for the enlargement of the chapel, the erection of a cottage and stable, at a reasonable rental. The opening services were held September 9 and 10 of that year, Messrs. Bryan, Gravel, R. M. Preece, and Griffith Davies being the preachers. Mr. Thomas Templeman, a native of Yorkshire, who had been engaged by Mr. Meyrick, Bodorgan, as a game-keeper, was the first class-leader, and he was also appointed the first Circuit steward of the Carnarvon Circuit, which at that time included the whole of Anglesey. He was a zealous and diligent worker, and a true Methodist, and walked twice a week to lead two classes at Aberffraw, though it involved great labour. He afterwards removed to Llangefni, and was instrumental in giving new life to the work there. His old master was so pleased with him, that he left him an annuity as an expression of satisfaction with him and his work. He died in the full triumph of a Christian victor in 1833, aged eighty-nine. Mr. O. Jones, Marian ; W. Jones, Yard ; and W. Williams, Llanfeirian, became trustees with others in the Circuit. Mr. Williams, Llanfeirian, who afterwards removed to Bodlawen, was also a most active class-leader and Circuit steward, and his wife, to whom there is a reference elsewhere, made their home one of those high-toned, loyal, happy, old-fashioned Methodist homes in which all must rejoice. Among the other workers were John Williams, Tycroes, who, prior to and after his removal to London was a devotedly good man ;

Mr. Jones, Typigyn ; W. Jones, Yard ; the Ffrwdwin family, and Mrs. Grace Jones. The latter was converted whilst invalided ; she was, after eight years of great suffering, restored to health, and became so zealous after her restoration that she would walk ten miles to hear a Methodist preacher. Robert Hughes was appointed class-leader, and his diligence and devotion soon won for him the confidence of the people of Elim.

Llangoed was first visited by Mr. Bryan in 1803 or 1804, and Robert Humphreys and others followed. The meetings were held in the house of Robert Broadhead, and later at Tycerig. A Society was formed in the former house, but eventually it almost died out. A few, however, retained their connection with Wesleyan Methodism, and attended the Beaumaris Chapel. In 1820–21, the Rev. Thomas Thomas commenced a Society at Llangoed for the second time, the meetings being held in the house of Lewis Thomas, the smith. David Morgan's ministry was made a great blessing in Anglesey, and the smith's house at Llangoed was found too small to contain the people who wished to hear him preach. Mr. Owen, stamp office, Beaumaris, and Robert Roberts took the matter in hand, secured a site, and in 1833 a chapel was erected. It was opened on November 24 that year, Rowland Hughes, R. M. Preece, and Owen Owen, Llansantsior, conducting the services. John Thomas, Plas Newydd, and Hugh Jones and the gentlemen above named became the trustees. John Williams, Penhenllys, was the first local class-leader, and John Williams, Tanyfron, steward. The divine blessing accompanied the efforts of the people, and the chapel became too small. During the ministry of the Rev. William Hugh Evans a new chapel was erected, at the opening of which Dr. William Davies was the special preacher. There were now a number of substantial families connected with the place, and there was no need of their leaning on Beaumaris. Messrs. Griffith Thomas, Rowland Williams, Elias Williams, Griffith Roberts, John Williams,

Penhenllys; William Roberts, Hugh Hughes, William Williams, and John Williams, Marian, became trustees. The first generation have passed away, but the zeal, diligence, and activity of Margaret Lloyd, Anne Jones, Mary Jones, Anne Williams, of Robert Broadhead, Thomas Owen, and John Williams, are sacredly cherished in the memories of the people of the locality. John Williams, Tanyfron, became a local preacher. Owen Williams entered the ministry in 1856, and his ministerial life has been a most honourable one. He has travelled in the leading Circuits, written several very able books, his volume on *The Will*, his translation of the New Testament, and others of his various writings establishing for him a leading place amongst the Welsh writers of the Principality. This Society has had good class-leaders in the persons of Rowland Williams, Griffith Thomas, John Williams, and Hugh Rowlands; while Griffith Roberts and Hugh Hughes have been so actively engaged in the work of the church that they too will long live for their work's sake.

Llanddona was not visited by any preacher like other places we have hitherto referred to. Hugh Jones and his parents had removed to live in an old storehouse on the way to Traethcoch, and he was determined to secure Methodist services in the place if possible. He first of all visited several of the neighbours, and secured their concurrence in the course he was about to take. Meetings were held in the old store, and afterwards in the house of Owen Owen, a net-maker. The Beaumaris friends and local preachers were chiefly responsible for the work, and an empty cottage was taken near the River Gorslwyd, in which an eccentric old woman had lived. Messrs. William Williams, Beaumaris, J. Hughes and W. Hughes, from the same place, were very faithful and thoughtful about this place. The Baptists had a small place of worship, which in consequence of some dispute among them was not used, and which the proprietor

offered to the Methodists at a small rental. This was accepted. In the month of June 1847 it was opened for public worship. William Williams and J. Hughes, who had been so attentive to the little Society and had become responsible for the money, were the first to preach in it, and at the first service there were seven conversions. The next night Methuselah Thomas was the preacher, and four others joined. The Society continued to prosper, and during the ministry of the Rev. Humphrey Jones a new chapel was erected, Messrs. Hugh Jones, Hugh Hughes, Morgan Jones, William Jones, John Hughes, Hugh Williams, and J. E. Hughes becoming the trustees. The debt pressed heavily upon the friends for some time. Mr. Owen Jones discharged the duties of class-leader with considerable zeal and fidelity, and John Jones, who is a travelling preacher in Australia, began to preach in this Society.

When Messrs. Bryan and Maurice had been at Amlwch in 1802, they decided to visit Cemmaes, a small port not far from that town. The inhabitants, however, knowing of their visit, had been warned not to countenance them, as they were heretics, and were to be avoided like lepers. The people succeeded in obeying the instructions, and when the preachers reached the village no one could be found who would give them food, stable their horses, or even for a time listen to their preaching. Mr. Bryan went to a little shop and bought a loaf of bread, which he carried through the street. This was the only food he could secure for himself, his colleague, and their horses. Undismayed, they took their stand on a stone wall near an old warehouse, and Mr. Morris began to preach. He was a son of thunder, and on this occasion went even beyond himself, and left his congregation in despair. Mr. Bryan, although he had no intention of taking part, thought he would pray, and in his prayer he emphasised the greatness of God's mercy with so much tenderness and effect that a woman shouted out, 'No drowning! no drown-

ing ! no drowning ! I have found mercy. God has forgiven my sin.' That woman, it was afterwards ascertained, had been driven to utter despair by the doctrine of reprobation, and had determined to commit suicide. She heard the Wesleyan preachers while on the way to drown herself, and was saved from a suicide's fate. This incident opened a door for the Methodist preacher, and was the medium of attracting considerable attention. Other preachers visited Cemmaes, and when John Hughes came in 1803 he found a promising Society there. Mr. Bryan visited the place again, and in his congregation was found a young woman deeply impressed, who also found Christ. 'The marriage of the Lamb' were the words that were on her lips all the time, and ringing in her ears. A few days after she was drawing water out of the river, when she missed her footing and was drowned. This incident was the subject of conversation throughout the neighbourhood. Mr. and Mrs. Brodiard, Trerго, opened their house to receive the preachers ; their daughter was the first wife of John Elias, and they were closely connected with those who had endeavoured to prevent the first preachers entering the place. Another daughter, Mrs. Chambers, welcomed the preachers to her house for many years. The house of William Pritchard, called Sarn-y-Grwban, was the place where the meetings were held. In 1810 the chapel known as Bethania was erected. R. Lewis and his wife became a great help to the work at Cemmaes, and Mr. Thomas Meyrick of Cefncoch, one of the county families, was a tower of strength. His home being situated between the Llanfair and Cemmaes Chapels, he would attend the former in the morning and the latter in the afternoon, taking with him the preachers of both places. William Hale, a Cornishman, identified himself with the Methodists also. He was a class-leader, led the singing, and was generally useful in every branch of work. Notwithstanding that he was an Englishman, he had come to Wales to reside, was determined to

master the vernacular, and to unite heartily with the people, and his life was very useful. In 1846 the chapel was enlarged and the little cause at Bethania continued to prosper. Robert Owen, one of the members of the Society, became a local preacher. William Aubrey was for some time connected with this cause. The second minister resided here for a time. Mr. Henry Owen, Tyddyn-gele, was appointed class-leader, and his energy and zeal seemed almost essential in the working of the church.

The Llanfair-yn-nghornwy was visited in 1804 by Mr. John Maurice, who preached in a farmhouse called Bryn-y-Golgaeth. There is some probability that he was preceded by another preacher, whose name is not accurately known, but who was probably Mr. John Hughes, who passed Llanrhuddlad in 1802, and called to see the Rev. John Lewis, the curate. The first to join the Society were John Hughes, the sexton of the parish church ; Mrs. Lewis, the curate's wife, her man-servant and maid-servant ; William Thomas and his wife ; Henry Jones, Caegwyn ; Richard Jones, Lodge, and the wife of Bryn-y-Golgaeth. The meetings were held in the last-named farmhouse for about three years ; the kitchen was used as the preaching room, and the parlour as the place in which to hold the Society. Mr. Lewis, the clergyman, was a native of Cardiganshire. He had heard Mr. Wesley preach at Carmarthen, and under his preaching he was greatly profited, so was always ready to assist Methodism. On one occasion Mr. John Jones (1st) met the class at Llanfair, asked for the book, and Mr. Lewis, who was present, handed the book to the minister, with the information that the class-leader was unable to be present that night, and the curate had come in his stead. In this case the sexton was the class-leader. In 1807 a chapel was erected, Hugh Owen, Gilfach ; Richard Thomas, Garn ; Robert Jones, Bryn-y-Golgaeth ; William Williams, Darain ; and William Pritchard, Sarn-y-Grwban, being the trustees. A great meeting was held to

dedicate the new place of worship on November 13, 1807, at which Mr. David Rogers, John Maurice, and John Davies preached. Mrs. Jones of Bryn-y-Golgaeth was zealous, generous, and most loyal to Methodism ; and when she passed away, Mr. Griffith Hughes, Mynachdy, provided a home for the preachers, hospitality being in those days an important institution in connection with the itinerary. Griffith Hughes's daughter became the wife of Mr. Thomas Meyrick, and her house was the home of the preachers. She continued faithful and zealous up to her death, and in her will bequeathed a sum of money to assist in carrying on the work in the Cemmaes and Llanfair Societies. Llanfair suffered from the agitation of 1831, more especially by the loss of preachers. The Society was, however, visited with some gracious revivals. A young man full of life, mirth, and playfulness became suddenly very solemn, and his friends were desirous to know the reason why. For some time the only answer given was, 'There will be great prosperity at this little chapel before long,' referring to the Wesleyan chapel. This reply seemed the more mysterious because the young man did not attend that chapel. Some time after, one of his friends drew from him the explanation that the prayer of the servant-man of Mynachdy, which he had overheard from the other side of a hedge, left such an impression upon him that he was led to pray himself. Such a prayer as that which went up from the field he had never heard. The agony of soul in the servant-man's struggle with God on behalf of the Llanfair Society was so real that God could not withhold a rich outpouring of His Spirit. A few weeks after, forty were added to that Society ; the good work continued, and the revival spread to some of the other churches in the locality.

Maelog Society was founded as early as 1803. Mrs. Ellen Jones of Dyfriar went on a visit to some friends at Denbigh, and attended service in the Wesleyan chapel, which

had recently been opened in that town. After one of the meetings she went to Mr. John Maurice, and pressed him to go to preach at Anglesey, which a short time after this he did in her house. Other preachers succeeded him. In 1804 Mr. John Jones (Corwen) formed the Society on a more satisfactory basis. Mrs. Jones; Hugh Hughes, The Mill, and his wife; John Rowlands, Grib, and his wife, and others, became accredited members. The Methodist preachers were subject to considerable persecution in this place. Mr. William Roberts, Bangor, went here to preach, and secured an old smithy in which to conduct the service. Before he had proceeded far there came up two men, sent by the clergyman of the parish, one being his servant-man and the other William Chambers, whose daughter Betti accompanied them carrying an apron filled with small stones to throw at the preacher. Before she began on that desperate work she thought she would hear what he had to say first. The word arrested her attention, gradually won her sympathy, and she dropped the stones. The men, however, interfered and the preacher was obliged to cut short his discourse. Mr. Roberts tried a second place, and was again prevented, but he succeeded on the third attempt to finish his sermon. The clergyman, whose name was Roberts, gave way to sin and died a pauper; Chambers became insane, and the servant-man met with a most peculiar death. The death of these three was for years referred to by the people as a punishment from God. The house of R. Jones, Glan-y-gors, became the preaching-place, and then the Garreglwyd, which was made as chapel-like as possible. In 1820 a chapel was erected, William Roberts, Tyn-y-Morfa; John Jones, Plas; Hugh Roberts, Tyddyn Howel; John Rowlands, Grib; Richard Williams, Tynrhos; Robert Jones, Glan-y-gors, becoming trustees. Hugh Pritchard was the first class-leader; Richard Williams and William Roberts also became class-leaders, and were followed in after years by William Williams, Bodlawen, and

John Rowlands. In 1862 it was found necessary to erect a new chapel much larger and better. Mr. Owen Griffith, Fronwen, was a most faithful and generous worker with the new chapel, which was opened for divine worship on June 30, 1863, Dr. William Davies, John Jones (c), W. Jones (A), Griffith Jones, and John Pierce being the preachers on that occasion. John Jones, Plas Maeleg; Hugh Jones, Glangors; Owen Williams, Felin-y-Traeth; William Jones, Maesllan; William Pritchard, Cogwen; and John Rowlands, Tyn-yr-Ardd, all became trustees. The old members, who were zealous and energetic in their day, never swerved in their loyalty to the Church of their choice, and those whose names are printed above passed away to the skies in the full triumph of the gospel of Christ. John Rowlands and William Roberts were also energetic workers, leaders, and local preachers. In recent years William Jones, Maesllan, and William Pritchard have been diligent class-leaders, and Owen Williams filled other offices. Maeleg has grown of late years, and is not without hope of a brighter future. The Holyhead Circuit has been more active, and Societies have been formed in two or three other villages.

Anglesey was the centre of the Welsh reform agitation, to which reference has been made in connection with several churches. Owen Owen, the chief leader of the agitation, was converted at Holyhead, where he joined the Methodist Society in 1814, and began to preach in 1816. Mr. David Rogers gave him considerable assistance in his studies, and he proved a very acceptable preacher. In 1819 he accused the Rev. David Jones (2nd) of being indolent. The reason assigned for the charge was that Mr. Jones did not preach more frequently in the Holyhead Chapel. Shortly after this Mr. Owen married, and became exceedingly embittered against the ministers. On September 19, 1831, a meeting was called of local preachers at Llangefni, when they expressed

their agreement with Methodist doctrine, but added that they did not believe in its methods of operation. When the quarterly meeting was held a few days later, the superintendent asked all the preachers the usual questions, when Owen Owen and his friends were told that they had acted unconstitutionally, and were asked to admit that they had done so. The superintendent was compelled to insist on their confession of wrong-doing or their withdrawal, and they preferred the latter.¹ Mr. Owen Owen on the following Sunday went to the Wesleyan chapel and endeavoured to disturb the service, and then visited from house to house and place to place, and with a few others endeavoured to create ill-feeling in the minds of Methodist local preachers and members. By these means a great deal of mischief was done in various parts of North Wales. Anglesey Methodism, however, suffered less than the adjoining county. Mr. Owen Thomas, who had been in the ministry, but was now a local preacher and class-leader, writing to the Eurgrawn in 1832, gave the account of the Mona quarterly meeting held October 8th at Maeleg, containing the following facts:—In December 1831, the total membership in the Circuit was 566; at this meeting the returns showed 762, with 149 on trial for membership. ‘The Achans of our camp is gone,’ adds Mr. Thomas, ‘and we have peace and prosperity within our borders.’ He also acknowledges the sympathy of the Calvinistic Methodists, Congregationalists, and Baptists during the agitation, ‘which we are gratified to find in this county.’ The agitation was purely a Welsh one, and while it did considerable mischief to Methodism was a miserable failure in itself. The churches formed by the dissentients have nearly all died out, and the results of the agitation must have been most disappointing to all who were in any way connected with it. Methodism has survived the shock and others that followed. It has more than held its own as to membership

¹ *Vide Blaguryn-y-Diwgyriad, 1842, p. 51.*

throughout the county; it has turned persecution into respect; it has checked the high Calvinism which predominated throughout the fair isle, and is vigorous with youth, confident in its mission, and anticipating a still more prosperous future.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WELSH SOCIETIES IN LIVERPOOL, LONDON, MANCHESTER, AND OTHER PLACES IN ENGLAND.

The Welsh Population—First Welsh Society—Richard Davies—William Lewis—Bryan—John Hughes—Maguire Street—Benn's Garden Agitation—Aubrey's Preaching—Heavy Debts—Old Class-Leaders—Matthew Williams—William Jones—Efforts to pay Debts—Burroughs Chapel—Sale of Benn's Garden—Shaw Street Chapel—Zion Chapel—Boundary Street Chapel—Birkenhead—Widnes—Lancashire Welsh Mission—Bootle—Edge Hill—Manchester, St. David's Chapel—Growth of the Work—London, St. Mary Axe—Wilson Street—City Road—Portland Street—Hanley—Birmingham—Stockton—Need of Welsh Preaching.

LIVERPOOL has been looked upon as the metropolis of North Wales, and the Welsh Circuits in that important city have exercised a very considerable influence over the life and development of the Wesleyan interests in all the northern parts of the Principality. The Welsh population of Liverpool is considerably larger than that of any single town in North Wales. And as will be accepted by those who consider the question from a high and just standpoint, Welsh places of worship are essential in English towns in which a number of Welsh people reside. It is a mistake to imagine that a Welshman, who may be able to transact business or enter into conversation, can with satisfaction and profit worship in an English church. The language of home, of religion, of poetry and song, of sacred memories, of revivals, of early and moulding influences, and of the true ideal, will ever remain the Welshman's most reliable channel of communication with the Divine. Moreover, there are many Welsh people who,

when they remove to centres like Liverpool, could not worship in any other language. English Methodists have been more than repaid for any kindness shown to Welsh Wesleyans in the number of active young people they have ultimately found amongst their English workers, who were originally connected with the Welsh Sunday school.

So far as is known, the first Welsh sermon in Liverpool was preached by Owen Thomas Rowland, a Calvinistic Methodist preacher, in Pitt Street Chapel, about the year 1770, before the chapel was really completed. The first Calvinistic Society was formed in a cottage in Pitt Street, occupied by William Llwyd, who had been a member of the Calvinistic Methodist Society in Flintshire before he came to reside in Liverpool. After his removal to the latter place he identified himself with the Wesleyans, but some time after he invited a few of his countrymen to hold meetings in his own house, and in 1782 the Society was formed. Evan Parry (afterwards of Denbigh) and other Wesleyans were connected with that little Society for some time. They invited preachers from Wales who could conduct their service in the Welsh language, and there being no Welsh Wesleyan preachers in the Principality they had no choice—the preacher must be a Calvinistic Methodist. Evan Roberts, who had left the English Wesleyans to form the Welsh Society, and had been largely instrumental in securing the old stone house afterwards known as ‘Billy Merchant’s Chapel,’ felt that he could not accept the hyper-Calvinism preached there from time to time, and he returned to his own people. Some time afterwards he was authorized by Mr. Wesley to preach the gospel. He was probably the first Welsh local preacher in Liverpool, and ministered to a mixed company near a copper work, and through his preaching several identified themselves with the English Society at Pitt Street Chapel. The first Welsh Wesleyan Society was formed in 1801. Love-feasts were frequently held, and were very special means of grace in

connection with early Methodism. Two Welsh Wesleyans, members of the English Society in Liverpool, decided to go to Ruthin, in order that they might be present at a love-feast to be held there on Easter Monday in that year. The two men were Richard Davies and William Lewis. The love-feast was a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and the brethren returned to Liverpool determined to hold meetings for their fellow-countrymen in that city. The first meeting was held in Midge Hall Street, near the Welsh factory in Vauxhall Road. William Lewis, with the echoes of the praises and testimonies of the new converts at the Ruthin love-feast sounding and resounding in his ears, began the meeting, and they so fully realized the presence of the Lord of Hosts in their midst that they determined to hold a second meeting the same week. Richard Davies, a native of Dinas Mawddwy, preached the first sermon, after which he invited those who wished to join the Welsh Wesleyans to remain behind. Several responded and determined to cast in their lot with the new sect. They were ready to accept their doctrine and discipline, and to assist in forming a Society. The following week William Lewis made his first attempt to preach. The meetings were now held in the vestry-room of Leeds Street Chapel, out of Old Hall Street. Dr. Adam Clarke was the superintendent of the Circuit, and Mr. Richard Davies brought the matter before the quarterly meeting. Mr. Bryan, then a young local preacher at Chester, came to preach for them a few times. In 1802 Messrs. John Hughes, Jones (Bathafarn), Bryan, and Maurice visited Liverpool, the two last-named members devoting a good deal of time and attention to the work in that city. The services devolved upon Richard Davies and William Lewis when the missionaries were not able to be present. Richard Davies was a joiner, a man of some originality and individuality, and if not much of a preacher, his zeal and devotion were unbounded. On the Sunday his wife died he was planned to

preach in Maguire Street in the afternoon. When the hour came, he locked the door of his house, went to his appointment, and after preaching announced the funeral of his own wife, and the next day made her coffin. This was characteristic of the man and his intense devotion to the work. The light of eternity shone upon all his transactions, and he lived and worked prompted by one aim—the glory of God and the building up of Methodism. William Lewis was a man of sound common sense, who worked diligently to acquire education, and became a schoolmaster, having charge of the Stanhope Street Day-School, held in Jordan Street. He was a faithful class-leader, and did good work as a local preacher. Such were the two men who were instrumental in the introduction of Welsh Methodism into Liverpool.

In 1803 Mr. Bryan was appointed a Welsh missionary. David Rogers had been in Liverpool for some time prior to Mr. Bryan's appointment, working with his hands every week-day and preaching on Sunday, and Mr. Bryan found sixty members in Society when he entered upon his work. During the first two months he was privileged to see the membership increase to one hundred. During the year Mr. Comer, a generous member of the English Society, bought the Maguire Street Chapel, and offered it to the Welsh Society, which offer Mr. Bryan thankfully accepted. By the end of the following May (1804) the chapel was too small, for the membership had increased to two hundred. Richard Davies, William Lewis, Richard Buckley were the class-leaders. Edward Evans was also made a class-leader, and before the end of the year it was found necessary to appoint David Rogers and William Williams leaders. About that time Mr. Matthew Williams, a young man from the neighbourhood of Abergele, who had been residing in Liverpool for some time, was converted under the preaching of Mr. Jones (Bathafarn), and became one of the most active and influential of Wesleyan Methodists in the city, identifying himself with the Society.

One of the dangers of the work was its prosperity. The pressgang was busy in Liverpool in those days. On one Sunday night after preaching, Mr. W. Jones, Llanelidan, accompanied by a friend, were on their way home, when the preacher was taken to the press-room and kept for the night. The gang, however, could not speak or understand Welsh, and the preacher could not use the English language, which involved both parties in a difficult position. Friends interceded, and the next day Mr. Jones was delivered out of his troubles.

In 1804 Mr. John Hughes was appointed to Liverpool, but as he was obliged to spend some months of his time translating Dr. Coke's Commentary into the Welsh language, and also visiting the southern parts of the Principality, he was not able to devote much attention to Liverpool itself. Mr. Bryan was a more enthusiastic preacher, and had seen the work prosper beyond expectation; Mr. Hughes did more that year in consolidation than numerical increase. During this year John Rogers, a native of Rhiwabon, began to preach, and, as mentioned elsewhere, entered the ministry in 1807. There were several able local preachers in the Circuit, most heartily supporting the minister. The following year John Jones (1st) was appointed the superintendent of the Welsh work, but he lost the valuable help of David Rogers. Robert Humphreys, however, was with him a part of the year. Robert Hughes, late of Llanor, Pwllheli, brought to the Wesleyan chapel his brother Hugh Hughes, who was converted, soon began to preach, and until he entered the ministry was made a great blessing in the working of Methodism in Liverpool. Shortly afterwards Mr. William Jones, Mount Pleasant, who had been converted under the preaching of David Rogers at Denbigh, came to reside in Liverpool, and proved one of the strongest pillars of the church. In 1807 the Blundell Street Chapel in the south end was rented, and regular preaching was instituted in a second place. Robert

Roberts, a native of Ysgeifiog, was made a class-leader, the duties of which office he discharged with diligence up to the time of his death. The ministry of David Jones, Beddgelert, was made a great power in Liverpool. Both chapels were crowded, and the need of larger accommodation was keenly felt. Mr. Matthew Williams and William Jones were made class-leaders. Some well-known Wesleyans died in the faith of the gospel, giving clear testimonies that they were going to be with Christ, and these deaths confirmed the teaching of the Methodist preachers. Mr. Samuel Davies, during his ministry, arranged a series of cottage prayer-meetings all over the town, as many as nine being held the same night. These meetings were specially owned of God, and very rich blessings were manifest in many of the homes of the people.

During the ministry of Robert Roberts, Bonwm, Benn's Garden Chapel was secured. Benn's Garden was a chapel which had been erected as early as 1726 or 1727 by the old Presbyterians, who had really become Unitarians. It was bought by Mr. Cower, Mr. Kaye, and Mr. Crock. The intention was to sell the property, which they had bought for £2000, for a larger sum, and build, at some not very distant date, a chapel elsewhere. The chapel was opened on November 20, 1813, after considerable improvements had been effected, the Revs. Samuel Bradburn, Owen Davies, and John Bryan being the preachers. Mr. Bryan was now the minister stationed in Liverpool, and a period of prosperity followed the removal to the new home. The Welsh and English Societies in Liverpool were all included in one Circuit. There were fourteen Society classes in connection with the Welsh work; the class-leaders, in addition to those previously mentioned, being Robert Davies, a native of Denbigh, who was one of the early converts; Evan Evans; John Hughes, a native of Denbigh, who left for a while during the agitation, but returned to the old fold and died in peace in 1852; John Jones of Ruthin, a nephew of Owen Davies, an intelligent and successful class-

leader ; Thomas Lloyd, Chester Street, who left during the reform of 1850 ; Henry Lloyd, who became the leader of the singing, and one of the most eminent and successful choirmasters, in connection with which he rendered most invaluable services to Methodism in Liverpool, so far as his health would allow, up to the time of his death in 1854 ; and Edward Owen. Elizabeth Williams, a very good woman, was also made a class-leader, and some time afterwards her husband, William Williams, who was also a local preacher. Thomas Simon, a native of Rhuddlan, who removed to Liverpool, was also added to the leaders, a position which he held (with the exception of a short interval when he was drawn away by the reform agitation) for forty years.

The years 1817 and 1818 were very trying. The agitation was successful in drawing away leaders, local preachers, and members. The wisdom, fidelity, and patience of the Rev. Edward Jones, Mr. Matthew Williams, and a few good men were, however, ultimately rewarded by a return of the bulk of the Society, the keeping up of the finances ; and at the end of the second year they were really in a better position, financially and numerically, than they had been before the agitation. The work went on for several years without many changes, the Society rather more than holding its own, but not making marked progress. In 1826 the Welsh Society was separated from the English, and two English Circuits and one Welsh Circuit were formed, and this arrangement proved beneficial. Messrs. Matthew Williams and William Jones, Mount Pleasant, were elected Circuit stewards, the Rev. David Williams being the first superintendent, and Mr. Rowland Lloyd the Society steward. His colleague in the latter office was Edward Griffith, who discharged the duties with diligence and efficiency. The Society and congregation at Benn's Garden were only making slow progress. Many of the old class-leaders had been called to their reward, and others had left the town ; others were qualified to fill their

places. Thomas Clubb, a native of Bala, was a zealous and ardent follower of Christ; and Morris Owen, a native of Llanfyllin, who had been in the army, and whose life had been one of hardened vice, was in a marvellous way led to the Saviour. He came to reside in Liverpool, identified himself with the Society at Benn's Garden, and became one of the most devoted workers and successful class-leaders. Robert Morris, who some time afterwards removed to Meifod; John Simon, a son of Thomas Simon (hence father and son were leaders); while Thomas Evans, who hailed from Beaumaris; Thomas Jones, W. P. Jeffreys from South Wales; William Jones, bell-hanger, and E. Roberts, who after a while left for Oswestry, were class-leaders in the old Society at Benn's Garden. The membership, which had been steadily growing, had now reached five hundred, and the finances justified the Society in asking for a second minister. In 1835 Richard Bonner and David Gravel were appointed. The friends were now determined to have a second chapel; a site was secured in Chester Street; the following year the chapel called Zion was opened, and a number of those living on that side of the town removed to the new chapel. Meetings had been held in cottages in various parts of the town from an early date, but now the friends had two good chapels and two ministers. In 1836 David Williams and Rowland Hughes were the ministers. The superintendent was then one of the ablest preachers of the Welsh pulpit, while his colleague was rapidly attracting attention, and many of the best people were often astonished as they listened to such powerful discourses from so young a man. Their ministrations were highly appreciated, and large congregations crowded to hear the Methodist preachers. Thomas Jones, Haddington Street, formerly of Denbigh, and John Williams, Frederick Street, had been made class-leaders. Richard Solomon, a native of Denbigh, and a brother-in-law of the celebrated John Owen (Gyffin), and Richard Vaughan, a native of Aberdyfi, were

added to their number. Messrs. Solomon and Vaughan were active local preachers, and the son of the former became the able superintendent of an important Circuit in the English work. Such was the growth of the work, and the migratory nature of those connected with the Society, that new leaders were appointed very often. Absalom Davies, originally from Flint; William Williams, Hartford Street, formerly from Holyhead; and William Jones, Llanelidan, who some time after his retirement from the ministry came to reside in Liverpool, constituted another batch of class-leaders; and shortly afterwards William Hughes, who hailed from Bodfari, and David and Evan Edwards were added to their number; while David Edwards was a faithful local preacher. In 1838 a class was formed at Birkenhead, and John Huxley was appointed leader. The same year Mr. Hugh Jones was appointed a class-leader in a northern part of the town. The good singing and preaching at Benn's Garden made the place a great attraction, while Zion also was gathering strength, and new Society classes were being formed. The Societies were all under one leader's meeting until the year 1839, when through the efficient superintendency of the Rev. David Evans (1st), they were so arranged as to give to each Society the management of its own affairs. The ministry of the Rev. Thomas Aubrey and William Owen was made a great blessing, and the membership had increased to 767 by March 1842. The division of interest was followed by a period of consolidation, and the work was placed on a better basis. The preaching of Mr. Aubrey made an impression upon the town, notwithstanding that Liverpool was favoured with such able Welsh preachers as Henry Rees, Dr. William Rees, Dr. John Hughes, Dr. John Thomas, and other eminent men. Alderman Hughes, recently Mayor of Liverpool, who in his younger days frequently attended the Welsh chapel at Benn's Garden, has testified to the great good he has received under the powerful preaching of Mr. Aubrey. The membership and

congregations were kept up during the ministry of Messrs. R. Bonner, Rowland Hughes, Evan Hughes, William Powell, and John Jones (Hamilis), notwithstanding a large number of removals. In 1849 Lot Hughes and Thomas Aubrey were again stationed in Liverpool, and they were called upon to defend Wesleyan Methodism against the charges of the reformers. The Welsh Societies in Liverpool suffered considerably. Notwithstanding the influence of Mr. Aubrey, several leaders, local preachers, and probably over a hundred and fifty members, joined the agitators. Robert Davies died, and a few others removed out of the town; the membership was brought down to 555, and the work was hindered for a time. John Edwards, David Evans, and Joseph Ellis were made class-leaders in place of some who had left, and John Hughes and probably other leaders were obliged to take charge of two classes. Robert Lloyd, formerly of Holywell, was also made a class-leader, and he continued faithful until his death in 1870.

A strange fact in connection with the old chapel at Benn's Garden was the heavy debt that had been allowed to remain on it. The original cost, inclusive of repairs, was £2400, but in 1852 the debt was £3300. That year the ministers were Richard Pritchard and Dr. William Davies, and a scheme was formulated to reduce the debt. A meeting was held in the Hope Hall on Christmas Day 1854, and £952 raised towards reducing the debt, the fund being afterwards increased, so that £1340 was paid off. This was a period of growing prosperity. The debts on Birkenhead Chapel and other interests were reduced, and 338 new members received into fellowship in the three years. During the forty-six years the Society had worshipped in the old chapel at Benn's Garden, 419 members of Society had died, 1567 had ceased to meet, 2948 had removed out of the Circuit, and 1415 had removed into the Circuit.

The Welsh Circuit had always been included in the Liverpool District, and while it drew the best preachers from the

Principality to supply its pulpits, it never contributed in support to the Welsh funds. In the year 1857, largely as the result of the efforts of the Rev. William Jones (A), the Circuit was transferred to the North Wales District, of which it has been an important part ever since. The population was moving away from the old chapel, and the congregation was dwindling, notwithstanding the powerful ministry of Rowland Hughes. An opportunity was seized by the trustees to sell the old chapel for £6500. The Rev. Rowland Hughes's farewell sermon before leaving the Circuit, August 26, 1860, was the last service in the old chapel at Benn's Garden. Mr. Aubrey was appointed the superintendent of the Circuit, and the Oddfellows' Hall was taken in which to hold services until a new chapel could be erected in some central place, and a third minister was appointed to the Circuit and to reside at Birkenhead. The hall in which the services were held was very inconvenient for the principal Society in the Circuit, and many members were in great haste to erect the new chapel. A good site was secured in Shaw Street, which was thought by many to be too far north. Considerable doubts then arose as to the legality of selling the old chapel, and using the money to erect a new one on the model deed. The Charity Commissioners for some time would not consent, and the Revs. F. A. West, Dr. Stamp, and others, after considerable and careful attention, declared that it could not be done. Mr. Aubrey, however, continued pressing the matter upon that important body of officials, finally succeeded in removing the difficulties, and after a delay of over six years Shaw Street Chapel was erected and opened for divine worship on December 29, 1866, and the following days, the Revs. Lot Hughes, Richard Pritchard, Dr. William Davies, O. Williams, Samuel Davies, John Evans (B), William Powell, William Jones, and Isaac Jones all taking part in the services. The trustees of the new chapel were Messrs. John Hughes, Maurice Williams, John Pritchard, R. T. Owen, John Thomas,

John Pugh, John Williams, Thomas Owen, T. J. Hughes, Owen Williams, and O. Lloyd Davies. Methodism prospered in Shaw Street, and it became one of the most influential churches in the District. Councillor Maurice Williams; John Williams, Bedford Street; Samuel Jones, Brunswick Villa; John Pritchard, Norwood Grove; J. Thomas, Grove Street, contributed handsomely towards the erection of the chapel, and in other ways so acknowledged their indebtedness to Methodism and their attachment to it that their memory will long be cherished by all who know the history of Liverpool Methodism. The class-leaders in Shaw Street were Michael Jones, Lewis Owen, David Rowlands, Maurice Evans, John Edwards, Evan Evans, William Parry, David Griffiths, John Jones (1st and 2nd), David Evans, and John Pritchard. Thomas Owen, John Pugh, Thomas Jones, and John Davies were stewards, who rendered good and faithful services in connection with the Society and Circuit. The names of Mr. Matthew Williams and his wife will ever retain a sacred place in the minds of Liverpool Welsh Wesleyans, and William Jones, Mount Pleasant, will long be held in high esteem. William Lewis, William Hughes, W. P. Jeffreys, J. Hughes, and Thomas Jones were Circuit stewards, who took great interest in the work of the Circuit; while Samuel Jones, John Pritchard, E. Lloyd, Thomas Owen, who more recently occupied that position of importance, have made for themselves a place and a name amongst the best traditions of the Circuit.

Liverpool has been the home of a large number of local preachers, several having entered the ministry, starting with Hugh Hughes and David Rogers, who went from the city to commence their career as travelling preachers; but as their native places were elsewhere, this Society has never been able to record them as her own children. John Jeffreys, who entered the English ministry in 1849, and David Solomon, who became a travelling preacher in 1866, are both able ministers of the gospel, who claim

this town as their home. Shaw Street is not without a number of active workers at the present time, and while they have such men as Edward Jones (Gwaenas), J. R. Morgan, son of the Rev. Ebenezer Morgan, J. R. Pritchard, J. Williams, R. Hughes, O. Williams, W. Chambers, son of Rev. J. R. Chambers, Jones, Evans, Pugh, etc., they will not lack men of influence and devotion to the work of God.

The Society which worshipped in Chester Street for many years was commenced by Mr. Edward Anwyl about the year 1833. His chief worker was Owen Foulkes of Llysfaen, Abergele, who had been converted under the preaching of John Hughes, Brecon, in 1802, and was a brother-in-law of Mr. Lot Hughes. He was a successful class-leader, local preacher, and continued a faithful follower of Christ up to his death, December 21, 1854. Mr. William Lewis and Mr. Foulkes were deputed to find a room in which to worship, and succeeded in Hill Street. William Jones, Llanelidan, was appointed class-leader in the new place. Mrs. Peters, Mrs. Williams (Lowther Street), Mrs. Martin, Mrs. Jones, chapel-keeper, formed a group of zealous Christian women connected with the Society. Mr. Anwyl, who had been instrumental in beginning the work, was asked to lay the first stone of the new chapel, April 11, 1836. The Revs. David Evans, William Powell, and Mr. Preece of Carnarvon were present, and took part in that meeting. It was opened for public worship, January 4, 1837, the services being continued for several days. The first Sunday the Revs. Dr. Newton, Robert Young, and Theo. Lessey preached, all the services being in English. The services held subsequently in Welsh were conducted by the Revs. David Evans, E. Anwyl, E. Hughes, R. Bonner, T. Aubrey, and R. M. Preece. The chapel, notwithstanding the unnecessary dome, was one of the most attractive of Welsh chapels in the town. In 1871 it underwent alterations and improvement, the expenses of which were met. In 1863, Mr. R. P. Williams and R.

Owen offered £100 each in order to clear off the debt on the chapel, and the effort was successful in removing all except the loan. There were only three classes when the Society was formed, but three years afterwards there were nine. Andrew Lewis, a native of Penmachno, was appointed class-leader; John Jones of Llanfair, known as J. Jones of Toxteth Street, Samuel Roberts, Humphrey Hughes, and George Roberts were appointed to fill the same office. Several changes occurred during the reform agitation in the staff of officers and leaders of the church. The names of T. Herbert, D. Jones, H. Owen, Edward Lloyd (Newby Street), E. Phillips, J. Owens, R. Hughes, and P. Williams are found amongst those who came into office and continued faithful to their trust during and after the reform movement.

The Zion Society has been more active, homely, and interesting than many of the neighbouring ones, as the result of which it has continued to grow. The position has been a good one, and surrounded by a large Welsh population, with a band of active workers, they have kept pace with the times. In 1871 Zion became the head of a new Circuit, the Rev. Robert Jones (B) being its first superintendent, and Mr. R. Hughes and J. Jones the Circuit stewards. The trustees and the friends generally in connection with Zion agreed to build a larger and better chapel. A fine site was secured in Prince's Road, and on Monday, May 24, 1880, memorial stones were laid by Mrs. Howells, Heman Street; Mrs. R. Jones, Heman Street; Mrs. E. Lloyd, Overton Street; Mrs. E. Jones, Admiral Street; Mrs. J. Thomas, Everton Terrace; and Miss Davies, Stanhope Street; and a very beautiful chapel was erected. The task this Society set itself to was, humanly speaking, more than they ought to have undertaken. The friends, however, had faith in God, and they worked with zeal and perseverance rarely equalled, and after a long, united, and most worthy effort the chapel was freed from debt excepting the loan. Messrs.

Edward Jones, Thomas Edwards, and George Davies were very liberal supporters of the scheme. The Society, Sunday school, and congregation are all in a flourishing state, and Mount Zion is now one of the most important centres of spiritual activity in the Welsh work. The zeal, persistency, and generosity of Captain J. Jones, Peter Davies, R. Hughes, William Jones, J. Williams, H. Jones, P. Hughes, T. Lewis, W. Williams, and others previously named, and possibly not a few whose names are not recorded, will be a standing rebuke to those churches which sink down under difficulties. The Zion Society had faith like a grain of mustard seed, and was able to remove the mountain. The friends are now in a position to go forward, and if the children are worthy of their parents they will go on conquering and to conquer.

The first meetings held by Richard Davies and William Lewis were on the northern side of the town, and when Benn's Garden Chapel was taken, the services on that side of the town were for a time suspended. In 1811 meetings were held in a dwelling-house in Thomas's Court, Bannister Street. Prayer-meetings and week-night services were held in a cottage for some years. In 1830 a small chapel in Bevington Bush, which had been erected by the Kilhamites, and which cause had now gone down, was rented, and for seven years was the home of the North End Society. In 1837 a chapel known as the Burroughs Garden, which had been erected by Dr. Burroughs and presented by him to Dr. Raffles' church, and used by them for a time for mission services, was secured by the Wesleyans. This chapel was opened for divine worship on the 1st of March 1837. The movement was largely the result of the efforts of Mr. Jones, Mount Pleasant, and a few others, who had been enlisted to support a forward movement inaugurated by Mr. Anwyl when on the Circuit. The movement was followed with success, and in 1839 there were five Society classes, the leaders being Messrs. Morris Owen, John Davies, Evan

Edwards, John Jones, and William Williams. This John Jones and his wife and three sons were at one time the only persons to hold a prayer-meeting. Owen Griffith, John Davies (Rose Vale), Thomas Jones, Maurice Evans, W. Davies were made class-leaders after the reform crisis had passed, and they continued faithful and worthy followers of those who lived and died in the faith. Griffith Roberts, formerly of Penmorfa, near Portmadoc, was an able and attractive local preacher connected with this Society. Mr. E. Lloyd's removal to this side of the town was a great blessing to the work there. A site had been secured in Boundary Street by Mr. Rowland Hughes before he left the Circuit, which was held by Mr. J. Hughes, Myrtle Street. The foundation-stone of the new chapel was laid by Mr. T. Hazelhurst, Runcorn, on the 1st of May 1862, and it was opened for divine worship, December 14, 1862, the Revs. Thomas Aubrey, William Powell, Samuel Davies, Richard Pritchard, William Jones, Owen Williams, and others taking part. The class-leaders were Edward Lloyd, W. Lloyd, John Thomas, Daniel Needham, and those previously named. The Society and congregation at Boundary Street has held its own and done a good work under many disadvantages, and with Gwilym Dafydd, John Davies, and other good men, and those whose names we have referred to, will continue to do good work, and wisely and confidently face the future, with every confidence of success.

Birkenhead was a small place in the beginning of the present century. Several Welsh people resided there, and the zealous Wesleyans of Liverpool were determined that their fellow-countrymen should have an opportunity of hearing the gospel of free grace in their native tongue. Richard Davies, William Lewis, and others conducted services for them in cottages. Although a part of the Liverpool Society, regular preaching was instituted at Birkenhead at an early date. In his biography of Mr. Owen Foulkes, Mr. Lot

Hughes says that that faithful local preacher preached a hundred and twenty-nine times at Birkenhead. In 1832, Thomas Jones, one of the Liverpool class-leaders, went to reside at Birkenhead, and in 1838 John Hussey was appointed a class-leader in that growing town. The Society was feeble, but expanded slowly. The need of a chapel was keenly felt, but the heavy debt on Benn's Garden and Chester Street Chapels, and the inability of the Birkenhead friends to undertake the responsibility themselves, delayed the erection of the chapel till 1845. The trustees then were connected with the Liverpool chapels, and after the erection the income was not sufficient to pay current expenses, and the Liverpool chapels were compelled to come to their rescue. The trustees were frequently annoyed when called upon to stand by a sinking trust. During Mr. Aubrey's ministry the town chapels consented to make collections for Birkenhead, which they did for some years, though these collections were strongly objected to by some of the friends in each of the Societies. During the very successful ministry of Richard Pritchard and Dr. William Davies, a scheme was formulated to reduce the debt on all the chapels. The scheme was a success, and by the month of August 1855, £560 was paid off at Birkenhead, leaving a debt of £300. This effort gave the people a heart to work, and the Society began to shake itself from the dust. In 1858 Andrew, Lewis, who had been a successful class-leader in Liverpool, removed to Birkenhead. Thomas Jones, a class-leader of eminent piety, who had been connected with the Burroughs Chapel, also removed there, and became a great help to the Society. More recently, Mr. Thomas Owen removed to Tranmere, and his valuable help was a source of strength in the building up of the cause in that town. In 1862 a third minister was appointed to the Circuit, and stationed at Birkenhead; the pioneers being R. T. Owen and John Hugh Evans, men of blessed memory. The result was satisfactory. Birkenhead Society increased

in strength year after year. The chapel soon became too small, and in 1876 a new chapel was erected, which is everything that could be desired. The labours of the Rev. Edward Humphreys, who was then minister at Birkenhead, were very greatly blessed, and the Society, congregation, and Sunday school in the new chapel have been in a flourishing state ever since.

In 1853, Mr. Edward Roberts of Abergel removed to Widnes. At first his family identified themselves with the English Society. They found Captains Hugh Williams and Parry and their families settled there, and they were impressed with the fact that though many Welsh seafaring men visited the place there was no chapel in which they could worship God in a language they could understand. So a saleroom was rented, and services and Sunday school and prayer-meetings held, which Mr. and Mrs. Roberts were frequently obliged to conduct themselves. Mr. Cooper then placed his kitchen at their disposal, and they invited the Liverpool preachers to conduct the services. Mr. John Jones, Toxteth Street, was the first preacher, and after his sermon two joined the Society. The Rev. Rowland Hughes formed the Society in October 1859. Mr. Samuel Rowlands, a local preacher, and John Kenrick, a good singer, removed to Widnes, the latter to manage a gas works, and their help was invaluable. The need of a chapel was felt, and Mrs. Roberts set off on a tour, and returned with £100 which she had collected. So the chapel was erected, and opened for divine worship on November 12 and 13, 1868. The chapel, which will seat three hundred, has since been improved, and class-room accommodation added. In addition to those named, Mr. Thomas Evans, Thomas Roberts, J. W. Owen, Robert Jones, Hugh Reece, William Lewis, John Parry, William Harries, Hugh Tudor, and John Hobson became trustees. The class-leaders were Edward Roberts, H. Tudor, R. and J. Williams, R. W. Roberts and Henry Davies being

stewards ; and the two Williamses, Tudor, and Edwin Jones rendered valuable services as local preachers. The Widnes Society has been a welcome home for many Welsh people who have come to that locality. It has also been active in gathering the outcasts from other localities in the surrounding district. The work is carried on with vigour, and the labours of Mr. Edward Roberts and his zealous wife have been specially owned of God. Widnes has now become the head of what is known as the Lancashire Mission among the Welsh, which is under the direction of the Rev. Owen Hughes, and which has already fully justified its existence.

The migratory character of the population, and the large number of young people who only come to the city for a short time with a view of returning to Wales, has been a permanent difficulty with which Liverpool Welsh Methodists have had to contend. A large number have gone over to the English Societies, and in many of the churches in the city are found zealous workers who were brought up with the Welsh. In 1875 Conference sanctioned the erection of a chapel at Bootle, which is well filled, and another Society at Edge Hill, which is also doing well.

It is difficult to estimate the influence of Liverpool Welsh Methodism upon the work in the North Wales District. It has certainly drawn from almost every town and village in and beyond the District, and also attracted the ablest preachers to labour on its Circuits ; on the other hand, it has responded more liberally to Connexional funds, raised the ministerial position, and strengthened the principles of Connexionism in the Welsh work. It has brought to the front a number of leading laymen, whose strength of character, generosity, and loyalty to Methodism have assisted in making it what it is to-day. The names of Matthew Williams, William Jones, Mount Pleasant ; John Hughes, Myrtle Street ; John Williams, Samuel Jones, one of the most generous supporters of Wesleyan Methodism in the District for many years ;

J. Pritchard, J. Thomas, E. Lloyd, T. Owen are well known, and will long be remembered for the influence of their character upon Welsh work throughout the District.

There are a number of young men who are capable of filling the positions of their fathers, and carrying on the work with even greater efficiency. And while the Welsh language lives in Wales, it will be the duty of Welsh Methodists to keep their chapels open for Welsh preaching, and the duty of English Methodists to support them if necessary in so doing.

Manchester has been closely allied with the introduction of Welsh Methodism into North Wales. The conversion of Jones (Bathafarn) occurred in that city. It was also Owen Davies's first Circuit, and it was here too that Mr. John Maurice, one of the first of the Welsh preachers, was converted, and identified himself with the Wesleyan Methodists. In 1804, Mr Richard Charles, who was a member with the English Wesleyans, invited Mr. Jones (Bathafarn) to visit the city, and preach to his fellow-countrymen. Great Bridgewater Street and Salford Chapels were promised in which to hold services, and some of the English friends offered to provide homes for the preachers. Shortly after, Mr. Edward Jones, Llanasa, then a local preacher, removed to Manchester, and followed his occupation during the week-days, and preached the gospel on the Sundays. In August of the same year, Mr. John Hughes was appointed to Liverpool, and to give one Sunday in each month to Manchester. In 1805 a certain local preacher, a man whose moral character was bad, had sown tares amongst the wheat, and when Mr. Hughes visited the Society to renew the tickets, he found considerable irregularity existing, and Mr. James Wood, the superintendent of the Circuit, was obliged to take the case in hand and expel the disturber. Mr. Hughes remained two Sundays in Manchester, and fortunately was able to set the

house in better order. The following Conference, in accordance with the decision of the quarterly meeting, a Welsh minister was appointed to work in the city in the person of Mr. Hugh Carter, and the success which followed fully justified this step. The services had to be held in the English chapels and vestries, and the difficulties of the situation increased with the growth of the work. In 1815, Mr. Bryan was appointed to Manchester under peculiar conditions. He was practically to find his own stipend, and keep his family as best he could. The members of the Welsh Society were then included in the returns of the Oldham Street Circuit; but Mr. Bryan's popularity in Manchester was soon established, and the Oldham Street Chapel was crowded whenever 'Little Bryan' preached. The way was now prepared for the erection of a Welsh chapel, and the task was accomplished during the ministry of the Rev. David Williams, who succeeded Mr. Bryan. The chapel was called St. David's, and was built in a convenient place between Manchester and Salford. During the ministry of Mr. David Morgan, who was appointed in 1824, this chapel became too small, a gallery was erected, and at the reopening services Dr. Bunting, Jones (Bathafarn), John Williams (2nd), and David Jones were the preachers. The meetings left a deep impression on the Welsh people generally, and also upon many of the English Methodists. The work continued to prosper for several years. In 1842 the health of the Rev. David Evans (2nd), who had proved a very acceptable preacher, gave way; and for the greater part of the year the pulpit was supplied by Mr. John Jones (Humlis), then a student at Didsbury, and by Mr. Samuel Davies, then a young man on the list of reserve. The cause suffered, and at the District meeting one of the English ministers in the city gave such a despondent description of the Welsh Society, that another member of the meeting proposed the withdrawal of the Welsh minister. The Welsh Circuit was represented

by two timid young men, and with Dr. Newton and other strong men against them, the resolution to give up the minister was carried. The leaders of the Welsh Society were astounded. They, however, appointed Mr. Isaac Roberts and Hugh Morris to explain their position to some of the leading ministers, with a view of arresting the mistake at Conference if possible. Mr. Anwyl spent a Sunday in Manchester on his way to the Sheffield Conference, and did much to encourage the friends, who were greatly depressed. Mr. Hugh Roberts was deeply interested in the cause, and everything pertaining to the chapel was near his heart; and when he heard that the Conference had withdrawn the minister, he and his family were laden with sorrow, which they could not shake off. Some of the Bridgewater Street friends were unwise enough to talk about selling the Welsh chapel, and other suggestions were made of a similar character. All these rumours were like thorns in the flesh of the zealous Welsh people. The stations confirmed the painful fact, and showed that the Welsh Society was under the charge of the Bridgewater Street Circuit, the superintendent being Dr. Stamp. Hugh Roberts and his family returned home from the Sunday morning service with heavy hearts. The good man could stand it no longer, rushed off to see Dr. Stamp, and when he stood before the new superintendent, without giving him an opportunity of saying much, Mr. Hugh Roberts cried out, 'The chapel is built for the Welsh; the deed says so; and if anybody will touch our chapel, we will punish him.' Dr. Stamp was so taken aback by this outburst, that it is said he was unable to preach that evening. The next morning the Doctor went to see Mr. Johnson of Cheetham Hill, and found that the clause mentioned was in the deed. This fact was overlooked by Conference and the Manchester District meeting, and their decisions were of no avail. So the Society was connected with the Liverpool Welsh District for the year, and Mr. Richard Roberts, being then a student at

Didsbury, was able to assist in the working of the cause. The following year the Manchester District meeting and the Conference were obliged to reverse their decision, and appoint a Welsh minister to work the Circuit. Fortunately, the Rev. Owen Owen was stationed as its minister, and notwithstanding the disastrous results of the previous year, the powerful preaching of the Welsh preacher attracted congregations, and the Welsh work in Manchester has been carried on with considerable success ever since. Mr. Robert Jones, Robert Roberts, Thomas Davies, Hugh Morris, and John Jones were, like others previously named, very zealous and devout Wesleyans. The class-leaders more recently were Messrs. John Roberts, George Roberts, W. Simon, R. Hughes, I. Parry, R. Thomas, and Rowland Francis.

The Manchester Welsh Circuit has raised up some eminent Welsh preachers of the gospel. Messrs. W. Simon, Hugh Morris, and John Jones were for many years local preachers of considerable reputation, and W. Davies, D. Jones, R. Owen, R. P. Watkin also belonged to that honourable class of workers. Owen Watkins, the celebrated African missionary, was brought up in this Sunday school ; it was here he began his religious life, became a Sunday-school teacher, and was trained for service in the Methodist Church. The Rev. Cornelius Jones, a popular minister in the English work, was a scholar in Owen Watkins's class in the St. David's Welsh Sunday school, Manchester. The old central chapel has suffered as the result of migration, but now there are chapels at Collyhurst, Gore Street, and Openshaw, and Welsh Methodism in the city of Manchester has and is doing good work. English Methodism has also benefited largely by the work. In many of the English Societies are found to-day men who passed through the Manchester Welsh Sunday school, who now occupy positions of trust, and are generous supporters of the work of God. The late Mr. William Jenkins of Miles Platting and his family and others may be mentioned. The

services of Messrs. W. J. Lewis, J. Cunnah, David Rees, J. Williams, R. Hughes, D. Owen, Lloyd, G. and W. Jones have contributed to the strengthening of Welsh Wesleyan Methodism in the city, and will continue to encourage the Welsh work as long as the Welsh language is used by the Welsh people.

In 1807, Mr. Edward Jones of Tyn-y-Caeau, Llanasa, then a local preacher, went, at the suggestion of the Rev. Hugh Carter, to London. He engaged in business during the day, but endeavoured to arrange for mission work in his spare time. In those days it was customary for the Welsh people in London to meet on the Sundays in the Lambeth Fields, where they spent their time in drinking and various sports. The young local preacher decided to go to that place to preach the gospel to his fellow-countrymen. On his second visit he met with and was invited to the house of a Mr. Mendus, a native of Cardigan. Shortly after, he was allowed to preach in one of the Lambeth chapels, and he formed a Society with about twenty members. Suddenly and without any explanation the chapel was closed against him, and for two Sundays the friends were without any place in which to worship. Mr. Owen Davies, the general superintendent of the Welsh mission, visited the Metropolis, and made arrangements for the Welsh to hold their meetings in Crosby Road Chapel. The following Conference appointed a Welsh minister to London. Mr. Edward Jones (3rd) was the minister, and Mr. John Hughes spent a part of the year in the city assisting Dr. Coke in the translation of his Commentary, and attending to the Welsh Society. In 1809 Mr. Hugh Carter was stationed in London, where he continued his ministrations for three years. He set about securing a site and making preparations for the erection of a new chapel. The members of the congregation contributed weekly, the men giving two shillings and the women giving one shilling a

week. The new chapel in St. Mary Axe was opened for divine worship on March 12, 1812. Dr. Adam Clarke, John Barber, and Walter Griffith preached on the first Sunday, but the services were all conducted in English. Mr. John Williams (1st) and Robert Roberts preached in Welsh on the second Sunday, and the work prospered for a time. In 1812, Mr. David Rogers was appointed to London and to the editorship of the *Eurgrawn*, which was for some years printed in London at 14 City Road. In 1847, the minister was withdrawn from the London Welsh Church, and the work of the pulpit devolved chiefly upon Messrs. David Jones and Henry Parry, who were then students at Hoxton. The break was very unfortunate. Some of the members joined other Welsh churches where a regular ministry could be secured; others, who were able to worship in the language, identified themselves with English Societies. Mr. Morris Davies held on for a considerable time, leading his class and preaching as often as possible, notwithstanding that the chapel had been sold and the Society given up. For some years, however, Welsh Methodism was practically extinct. In 1851, Mr. David Humphreys, one of a small band of devoted men connected with the Old Queen Street Society, Aberystwyth, removed to London. Mr. Humphreys was a local preacher, class-leader, and was able to work in connection with the English Society. But after he had been in the Metropolis a short time, he was greatly pained to find that many young people coming up from the Principality were lost to the Church, because she made no provision to meet their special requirements; and after consultation with Mr. Morris Davies, it was decided to recommence services in the Welsh language on Sunday afternoons in Jewin Street Chapel, Aldersgate Street. After a trial of about a year under these conditions, and finding that the work was steadily growing, notwithstanding many disadvantages, it was decided to take a school-room in Wilson Street, the Society being worked in connection

with the City Road Circuit. The membership had now increased to about fifty, and the Welsh people longing for more preaching were anxious to have a minister of their own, though in this desire they had no encouragement from the Circuit or District with which they were connected. They approached the Rev. Thomas Aubrey, the chairman of the North Wales District, who interceded on their behalf with the Home Mission Committee and his own District to support them for four years if necessary. At the following Conference, the Rev. Humphrey Jones was appointed to the London Welsh Church. In 1860, Dr. William Davies was the minister, and his preaching attracted the Welsh people, and the work prospered. A room in Wilson Street was bought and used after alterations and improvements. Dr. Davies travelled through many places in Wales, as did his successor, the Rev. Lewis Jones, collecting from door to door to pay for this scheme. It cost them hard work, but the task was finally accomplished, and the Wilson Street Chapel paid for. The friends were determined to take their full share of responsibility, and their next effort was to purchase a minister's house. In the meantime a Society was formed at Millwall, which was prosperous for some time; and in later years a very active, vigorous Society was being formed in the West End, and proved a great blessing to a large number of young people who come to reside in London for a short time.

The London Welsh Society has been the home of many noble Methodists. Mr. Mendus, who first invited the preacher to his house, is still prominently represented by the publisher of the *Eurgrawn*, the Welsh magazine. The Rev. Edward Jones (3rd) married his daughter, and their son, Mr. J. Mendus Jones, has for many years been the publisher for the Welsh Book-room. Old Mr. Watkins of Merthyr Tydfil was for years connected with the London Welsh Society. Mr. John Morgan, Aberystwyth, was a worker there for some time; and Mr. Morris Davies, through

ill and good report, remained ever faithful and consistent. Mr. David Humphreys was a superior preacher, who was highly welcomed in English and Welsh pulpits; and David Thomas and Edwin Jones became good class-leaders. David Jones, Hugh Morgan, Tiddy Jones (Westminster), J. H. Evans, D. P. Jones, J. Morgan, B. Williams, J. Roberts, J. Hay, J. Davies, and others from this church were also good, loyal supporters of the work of God among their fellow-countrymen.

The appointment of the Rev. John Evans (B) to the London Welsh Circuit in 1878 gave a new impetus to the work in the city, a goodly number of influential families were connected with the Society, and the need of a larger and better chapel was felt. The question was not without its complications. An opportunity to sell Wilson Street presented itself, which the friends thought was too good to be lost; hence they decided to go in for a new chapel. The scheme was a gigantic one, even for such a liberal Society and a superintendent of such abounding energy. They thought a great deal, prayed much, but seemed to be almost pressed into the big scheme. The step was taken, but it cost minister and people a long and desperate struggle to bring it to a successful issue. But the chapel was opened for divine worship in September 1883, the first services being conducted by the Revs. W. Powell, O. Owen, J. H. Evans, John Evans (B), Hugh Jones, David Young, Samuel Davies; and the English services by Dr. Jenkins, Richard Roberts, J. H. Morgan, and H. Price Hughes, M.A. This chapel, which cost between £9000 and £10,000, will be a permanent monument of the energy, determination, and resource of that most highly-esteemed and popular of Welshmen, the Rev. John Evans (B). The names of David Humphreys, David Jones, Hugh Morgan, Tiddy Jones, J. Griffiths, Elias and Edmund Evans, Hughes (Baldwin Street), Jones (Southgate Street), Roberts, W. E. Davies, the Joneses (Poplar and Hawley Street), deserve a place in the history of the work.

The zeal of the women was highly commendable, and the names of Mrs. Wood, Mrs. Davies (Avery Row), Mrs. Elliott, Mrs. Hay, Mrs. Hurburt, and the wives of the trustees, leaders, etc., deserve to live long in connection with the London Welsh Chapel and Society. There is now a central place of worship, with every convenience; a centre of Welsh activity, where Welsh people going to the Metropolis will always find a welcome home. The Circuit has a fairly good supply of local preachers, and with such men as Messrs. Edmund Evans, J. Griffiths, David Owen, D. Roberts, and D. Evans, the Welsh Wesleyan pulpit in London will maintain its efficiency, and Welsh people going to London are not likely to be disappointed either with regard to doctrine or evangelical teaching.

About the year 1849, four Welshmen met in the neighbourhood of Tunstall, and finding several of their fellow-countrymen in the locality, they decided to hold meetings for them in the Welsh language. One of the four was Robert Jones, a Wesleyan local preacher from Mostyn. He made himself useful, and frequently preached at Tunstall, Mow Cop, and Golden Hill. At each of these places there were a few good people. Mr. Richard Conway was largely instrumental in forming the Society at Mow Cop. Mr. Robert Jones removed to Hanley, and with Joseph Ellis and his wife commenced to hold services. Mr. Edward Pierce, a local preacher, came to reside at Hanley, and was followed ere long by Mr. John Williams, son-in-law of Mr. Richard Conway, who began to preach. They were now privileged with the valuable assistance of three acceptable local preachers. In 1854 it was decided to build a small place of worship, the shell of two cottages being utilized, and on December 9 and 10, Dr. William Davies and E. Simon conducted the opening services. The building was in Church Street, and was very soon made a success. Another small

place of worship had been erected at Tunstall. By 1860 the chapel at Hanley was filled, and the need of a larger and better place felt. The friends set about the matter in earnest. Robert Jones prepared the plans and superintended the work. A good chapel was erected and opened for divine worship, September 1861. The Revs. Samuel Davies, John Bartley, Isaac Jones, and Evan Pugh were the preachers on that occasion, and the cause continued to prosper. The friends felt the need of a minister, and approached the North Wales District meeting. The first effort was in vain, and about this time Mr. Robert Jones removed to Durham, which was a great loss to the Welsh cause in Staffordshire. The pulpit was supplied regularly by the two local preachers and an occasional visit of some minister from Wales. A second application was made for a minister, and this time with success, and the Rev. Ishmael Evans was appointed in 1868 to labour at Hanley. Several good Wesleyans were now settled at Hanley; amongst others, John Griffiths, Thomas Jones, Edward Williams, Edward Conway, and David Jones. Edward Williams became a local preacher and a great help to the work in various ways, and Edward Hughes and Thomas Pierce rendered good services as local preachers. In connection with Mow Cop, Richard Conway was class-leader and mainstay of the cause, as John Pierce was at Butt Lane, and Francis Jones at Chesterton. Mr. R. Evans, T. Lloyd, E. Davies, and W. Pierce are active local preachers on the Circuit at the present time, and with the minister conduct the services at Hanley and Butt Lane, the only Societies which exist at the present time in the Circuit.

Nearly forty years ago a number of Welsh people from South Wales removed to the north of England, and several settled for some time in Witton Park, Stockton, Middlesborough, etc. A Welsh Society was formed at the first-named place, which was at one time very promising. Mr.

Jonna Treharne from Dowlais and others settled there. A hired local preacher was engaged, and was very successful in his work. Mr. William Aubrey, a brother of the celebrated Thomas Aubrey, an eminent local preacher, removed to the locality to manage a large iron work, and became a tower of strength. A Society was also formed at Stockton. At both places a chapel was erected. In 1872 a minister was appointed. Societies have been formed at Crook, Spennymoor, and Tottenham, and there was a promising Society at Sunderland for a short time. Mr. Aubrey is still faithful and active at Stockton. Mr. Edward Bowen rendered good service as a local preacher and Circuit steward for several years. R. Jones, J. Jones, J. A. Jones, and D. Williams have assisted the minister in supplying the pulpits amongst the scattered Welsh people in the north. The Welsh people have had a small Welsh Society at Birmingham, the services being held in the old chapel in Oxford Street; but it never gained much strength in that city, and is now worked chiefly by students at Handsworth College.

A large number of young people from Wales seek and find employment in English towns every year. Some come with the intention of remaining for a short time only, others settle permanently. In almost every case the Welshman will inquire for a Welsh chapel, and although he may be able to converse freely in English, for many years he will prefer to worship through the medium of the Welsh language. And with these facts before the Church, it will be her duty to provide services in the language of the home and heart for many years to come.

CHAPTER XXV.

CALVINISTIC CONTROVERSIES.

Dr. Rees on the Origin of the Controversy—Rowlands of Llangeitho's Calvinism—Arminianism in Baptist Churches—Elijah Cole's Works—Thomas Jones—Denbigh—Hyper-Calvinism—How understood by the People—Higher and Lower Calvinism—Cynddelw—The Evangelical Treasury—Arminianism the Root of Evil—Charles of Bala—David Rogers—Samuel Davies—The Great Sermon on the Mountain—John Elias and Ieuan Glan Geirionydd—Edward Jones (3rd)—The Table and Interpreter—John Jones, Talysarn—Change in his Preaching—Its Effects—The Wesleyan Doctrines accepted.

DR. REES, in his *History of Nonconformity in Wales*, says that the great Calvinistic controversy in Wales began in 1815, a controversy which was prompted largely by the preaching of Arminianism by the Wesleyans.¹ The date given by Dr. Rees is not early enough; the controversy dates back to the introduction of Wesleyan Methodism. The preaching of the Welsh pulpit was essentially Calvinistic prior to the Methodist revival, which received a new impetus through the preaching of Daniel Rowlands, Howell Davies, Williams (Pantycelyn), Peter Williams, and others, who became supporters of that great movement. Howell Harris was either hesitant or more tolerant to others who were not able to accept the rampant Calvinism of that day. The controversy which divided Wesley and Whitefield in England soon found its supporters in Wales; with this difference, that in the Principality, with a few exceptions, all the Methodists were Calvinists.

When John Wesley, Howell Harris, and Daniel Rowlands of Llangeitho met at Machen, two Calvinistic preachers who

¹ Rees, *History of Nonconformity*, p. 463.

were present would insist on pressing upon Wesley and Harris a discussion, to which they objected, both being more anxious for peace than controversy. Mr. Wesley found a number of young Calvinists at Neath, who, in their zeal for their creed, used unjustifiable methods in order to destroy the Wesleyan Society in that locality. James Wood, Samuel Bradburn, Thomas Roberts, and James Buckley complained bitterly of the means adopted by Calvinists to destroy their influence and discredit their work, and even to reflect upon their character, in the various Circuits wherein they laboured in Wales. Hyper-Calvinism had taken a firm hold of the Welsh people, and the preachers felt it their duty to stamp out if possible the Arminian heresies. The new doctrine, as it was called, was not without its supporters, although they were few and far between. In 1799 twelve Baptist churches were expelled from their own Union because their ministers preached Arminianism. For some years there was a considerable number of thoughtful people who were seeking more light. Thomas Jones of Denbigh published a book called *The Mirror of Doctrines*, dealing with Calvinism and Arminianism, the latter being denounced in strong and unmistakable language. In his introduction, the author refers to the work of Elijah Cole, which he describes as an able defence of the doctrines of predestination and election, special redemption, preservation in grace, and other Calvinistic doctrines. The design of the book was to defend those doctrines. The book was published five years before the introduction into Wales of Welsh Wesleyan Methodism.

In his diary, Edward Thomas, giving instances as to how these doctrines were understood by the people and preached from the pulpits in the neighbourhood of Dyffryn, in the county of Merioneth, says that he heard one preaching from the words, 'When the Lord shall build Zion,' and who said, 'The stones, wood, and other materials were selected, and must be taken to the building. It was so with men; they must

come if found in the pig-stye, brothel, or public-house—they must come to take their place in the heavenly Jerusalem.' The early Wesleyan preachers in the vernacular from the very outset took their stand upon a full, a free, and a present salvation. Almost every sermon was an exposition of one of the Methodist doctrines. The most prominent doctrine was, 'Christ died for all.' The moral agency of man, the witness of the Spirit, Christian perfection, and conditional preservation in grace, these doctrines were faithfully and ably explained and defended. The preaching of the Wesleyans was therefore doctrinally directly opposed to the preaching of the other Churches in Wales.

The discussion in 1815 referred to by Dr. Rees was not so much between Calvinism and Arminianism as between higher and lower Calvinism, and was taken part in, not so much by Wesleyans, as by sections in other Churches. But it was directly or indirectly the effect of the preaching of the Wesleyans. Many of the moderate Calvinists were loosening their hold of Antinomian views. The Wesleyan preachers were intensely earnest, and founded their doctrines without hesitation or uncertainty on the Word of God, upon which they were willing to stand or fall. This fact influenced many to read their Bibles more carefully and thoughtfully, and gradually they began to feel that there was some foundation for the view entertained by the Wesleyans. The Rev. Robert Ellis (Cynddelw), one of the most reliable and eminent of Baptist ministers in the Principality, in his *Memoirs of Dr. Ellis Evans*, says that the most enlightened Calvinists of his day would not accept the hyper-Calvinism of the early part of the century.

In 1805 Owen Davies, the general superintendent of the Welsh Wesleyan mission in Wales, published a reply to the book written by Thomas Jones, previously referred to. In this volume Mr. Davies defended the doctrines of the Wesleyans, and of Mr. Wesley, who had been charged with

inconsistency. Two years later Thomas Jones published a reply, which was speedily answered by Owen Davies. Mr. John Parry replied to Mr. Owen Davies's second book. These little books created more or less sensation throughout the Principality, and led to heated discussion. The Calvinists condemned Mr. Wesley's translation, while Mr. Davies was accused of being an extreme Pelagian, and his writings were declared a stain on the Welsh language.

In the *Evangelical Treasury* (*Drysorgell Efengylaidd*) for 1807, Arminianism is said to be the 'root of all evil, a dishonour to God, which originated with the devil, whose great work is to sow the seed of Arminianism.' These were the prevalent ideas preached from the pulpits, and accepted by the people generally. John Bryan translated some of Mr. Wesley's essays on Reprobation, etc., into the Welsh language. David Rogers, a minister of considerable ability, defended through the press the doctrines of Wesley against the teaching of Dr. Lewis and Charles of Bala; and notwithstanding his youth and comparative obscurity in contrast with the prestige, ability, and public character of his opponents, his writings attracted attention, and set the people thinking. The pulpit became the arena of heated discussion. Many things were said on both sides of an extreme character. Reprobation was often called the accursed, the horrible, painful, and hellish doctrine by Wesleyans, etc., and the possibility of falling from grace was ridiculed by the Calvinists in equally strong and irritating language. Samuel Davies (1st) accused a Calvinistic Methodist leader of falsehood before two thousand people in the open air in the town of Carnarvon, and was never challenged. The Scripture, he said, was deliberately and falsely used with a view to uphold Antinomian doctrines.

When the Rev. Samuel Davies (1st) was stationed at Holywell the Society experienced a great revival, which became the occasion of stirring up the old spirit of antagonism which had slumbered for a short period. Mr. Davies

gave it out from the pulpit that he would preach the following Sunday on the ‘Universality of the Death of Christ.’ This announcement created quite a flutter in the enemies’ camp. The chapel was crowded. The preacher said that if the Calvinists continued to misrepresent the teachings of the Wesleyans, he would preach the sermon in every market-place and crossing in the county. These sayings spread like wildfire through the greater part of North Wales. The sermon itself left a deep impression upon the minds of many. Mr. Davies was pressed to preach the sermon again in the open air, and in some central place. The Foel Mountain was selected as the most central place for the counties of Denbigh and Flint. Thousands of people came together, and for two hours the preacher kept spellbound that large congregation, arguing with great ability that Christ had died for all. The sermon had a marvellous effect. Many were convinced that the Bible was on the side of the preacher, the Wesleyans were greatly encouraged, and Wesleyan Methodism made rapid progress. The county of Flint was very largely won for the Wesleyan Church, and that position it has maintained up to the present time. Samuel Davies—‘Old Sammy,’ as he was called—became the great champion of the Wesleyan doctrine. His great sermon was soon published and circulated largely, and was read, reread, and discussed throughout the Principality, and it made a deep impression upon the Welsh people.

The Calvinistic Methodists felt that the sermon must be answered. Thomas Jones of Denbigh, the ablest debater they possessed, was now getting an old man, and scarcely able for the task. John Evans of Chester had suffered so badly under the plain, pointed, and powerful pen of Stephen Games, that he was not prepared to enter into a conflict with him again. After some delay, Mr. Evan Evans, better known as Ieuan Glan Geirionydd, was prevailed upon to undertake the task. He was probably the mouthpiece of

John Evans and others. His reply was soon followed by a little book written by Samuel Davies under the title *Calvinism Explained and Unmasked*. It was a very able rejoinder, and further established the reputation of 'Old Sammy' as a debater. Ieuan Glan Geirionydd published an essay on the *Limited Atonement of Christ*, which drew out another reply from Samuel Davies, and the celebrated John Elias advised Glan Geirionydd to publish a translation of Harrison's Sermons on the subject, as being more likely to assist in the discussion, than for him to write more himself.

The Rev. Samuel Davies (2nd), in his *Biography of Samuel Davies* (1st), says that the essays were really written by John Elias and John Parry, and rewritten and published under the name of Glan Geirionydd. Shortly after the *Sermons of Rev. J. Harrison*, with an introduction by John Elias, were published, and in these the Calvinistic views were unmistakedly asserted and defended. In the meantime the discussion was carried on with great zeal throughout Wales. The coalpit, the mines, the quarries, the farmhouses, and the hillside cottages were scenes of heated debates.

A little booklet was published under the title of *Tom the Collier and David the Miner*. It was intended more especially for the masses, and, as Mr. Samuel Davies (2nd) says, 'not to argue the doctrines so much as to throw dust in the eyes of the people.' The Rev. Edward Jones (3rd) published a reply, to which he gave the title *The Defender of Truth*. Mr. Jones was a plain, pointed, and powerful defender of Arminian doctrine; he so thoroughly exposed the feebleness of the teaching in this little book that its authors were painfully convinced of their mistake, and made no attempt to defend it. Mr. Samuel Davies's last defence of Arminianism was not answered, and here and there were signs of uneasiness in the Calvinistic camp; a few were giving up the old doctrines, and not unfrequently the remark would be made within the Calvinistic circle, 'They have the Bible with them.' A Mr.

Edward Roberts, Berthengron, published a defence of Mr. John Elias's doctrine, which was followed by a little book written by Mr. J. Griffith called *Truth and Error Contrasted*. No Calvinist answered this. The Wesleyans had carried the field; Ieuan Glan Geirionydd admitted to friends that Mr. Samuel Davies had conquered him, and that he had come to the conclusion that Christ had died for all.¹ It is said that the careful study of the works of Dr. Williams of Rotherham had influenced him in the same direction. The celebrated Williams of Wern had probably given up his Calvinistic tendencies; there were other Congregationalists who were preaching from their pulpits, and ably defending through the press the evangelical Arminianism of the Wesleyans. The controversy was carried on in the homes, the Sunday school, and in the works. The Wesleyans were not placed under any obligation because of any kindness or sympathy shown them by the other denominations in the Principality during those years. The difficulty in securing a site upon which to build a chapel was frequently increased by men who were leaders of other Churches. Many things were done in the name of religion which defamed the sacred cause. One instance will suffice. The Wesleyans had been preaching for some time in a place called Penyrwtra in the Llanfyllin Circuit. They decided to build a chapel, fixed upon a site, and Mr. Jones (Bryntirion), a leading Wesleyan, saw Sir Watkin W. Wynne's steward, who promised the site asked for. In making arrangements in accordance with Methodist law, some delay was caused, and ere long it was discovered that the Calvinistic Methodists were building a chapel on the same site. Mr. Jones (Bryntirion) saw the steward, and asked for an explanation, when the steward said, 'Yes, a few days after you saw me, Mr. —— came to me and asked me for it; and thinking that he and you wanted it for the same purpose, I said "Yes, you are welcome to it." I

¹ *Biography of Samuel Davies* (1st), pp. 97, 98.

told Mr. Jones (Bryntirion) so when he saw me about it a few days ago.' The Rev. Owen Jones of Gelli was very near by superintending the work. The Calvinistic Methodists had two chapels, with more accommodation than they required within a short distance of the place. Mr. Samuel Davies, who was at the house of Mr. Lloyd, Meifod, when he was told of the incident, indignantly said, 'The curse of the Almighty will be upon their heads.' Some few years ago, this very chapel was taken from the Calvinistic Methodists as the result of bitterness caused during an election.¹ Some Wesleyans were evicted, and others were deprived of their situation, and all over Wales they were ridiculed.

About the year 1830, Mr. Edward Jones (3rd) discovered a 'Table showing the Way to Perdition,' and which has been attributed, rightly or wrongly, to Dr. Gill. Mr. Jones explained how the Table had come to his hands, how it was used by Calvinists, and what it meant, and how it taught the doctrine of reprobation in its most glaring and repulsive manner. The publication of this Table, with the interpretation (Lladmerydd), set the whole country in a state of tension once more. Mr. Edward Jones (Maes-y-plwm), a Calvinistic poet of considerable eminence, composed some lines of poetry, brimful of hyper-Calvinism and bitterness of spirit, which were circulated. This incident was followed by a good deal of discussion on both sides. There was, however, a considerable change in the position now taken up as compared with that assumed in the beginning of the controversy. It is possible that the doctrine of reprobation was still held by many, but no leading writer would defend it. Moral agency, and the possibility of falling from grace, and the witness of the Spirit, became the ground of contention. The preaching of Roberts of Llanbrynmair and Williams of Wern had made an impression upon a section of the community. John Jones

¹ *Biography of Samuel Davies (1st)*, pp. 188-211.

of Talysarn was greatly pained to see so little effect following the sermons preached by his brethren, and came to the conclusion that there was something wanting. The preaching of the doctrine of election, reprobation, total depravity of man, and his utter inability to do anything towards his own salvation, left a terrible gulf between the gospel and the sinner. Mr. Jones, after two years of great anxiety of mind, determined to bring out the human side in the plan of redemption, which had been so neglected in the preaching of his own denomination. The first sermon in which there were strong indications of his broader views was upon the words, ‘Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?’ He preached this sermon at two o’clock in the afternoon on the green at Bala. It was a masterly composition, delivered with great power, and he was greatly encouraged by its effects upon the congregation. But this sermon stirred the prejudices of many defenders of the Calvinistic faith. Mr. Jones made it plain that to go to perdition was a great calamity, and that responsibility for it rested upon the man himself. At the next meeting of the Association at Bala, 1835, Mr. Jones made the same great truth plainer still. He met with great opposition. Some of the leading men in his own denomination were greatly pained at the thought that one of the ablest ministers within the Calvinistic fold should be preaching Wesleyan doctrine. Mr. Jones, however, continued to give prominence to the practical side of the gospel, despite all opposition. At one time there were signs of a storm within the borders of the Calvinistic Church; there were rumours about departures from the orthodox doctrines; charges were made against certain preachers in Flintshire, and it was agreed at the General Assembly held at Llanidloes, July 1840, that a special meeting should be held to inquire into the whole subject. Mr. Jones was to some extent affected by this spirit

of contention.¹ The storm, however, passed over, his preaching gained additional strength, and he became more powerful, majestic, and successful. This turned the tide in the Calvinistic Methodist denomination. Calvinism died hard. The old views on election, reprobation, etc., have been preached in some pulpits within recent years, and possibly by a few good men up to the present time, but not many men can be found within any of the Calvinistic churches of the present time who will attempt to defend the doctrines usually associated with the term Calvinism.

The possibility of falling from grace has been more strenuously contested within recent years. The doctrine from the Wesleyan standpoint was taken up by Samuel Davies (1st) and others, and in more recent times by Richard Pritchard and Ebenezer Morgan and others. The moral agency has been ably dealt with by Owen Williams in his work on *The Will*, and Tappan's great work translated by Mr. John Evans (B). The preaching and writings of Dr. T. C. Edwards, now of Bala, has done much in recent years to broaden Welsh ideas on theological questions, particularly within his own body.

Many eminent and good men endeavoured to prove that the doctrines preached in the pulpits, in the open air, in the streets of the cities, on the roadsides, by the early Wesleyan preachers, were unscriptural, illogical, contrary to experience and common sense. The great preachers of Wales, Christmas Evans, John Elias, and others—preachers of the highest order—used their great powers in direct opposition to Wesleyan teaching, overlooked, ignored, and in many instances denounced them as heretics in the strongest language, though unguarded statements were made on both sides. But with all the imperfection in temper and mode of expression, the doctrines proclaimed, taught, and defended by the Wesleyan preachers have held their own, and are now more or less

¹ *John Jones, Talysarn*, by Owen Jones, pp. 486-491.

taught in every Sunday school and proclaimed from every pulpit in the Principality. If Samuel Davies rose from his grave at the present time, he would not find any one to defend the hyper-Calvinism of Elijah Cole. A Christ who died for all would be hailed in every market-place as an accepted doctrine. Jones (Bathafarn) would find that the witness of the Spirit is believed in by other denominations. David Rogers would find ‘man’s moral agency’ generally accepted, and ‘*gallu dyn*’ would not be laughed at. Even Owen Davies would soon discover that a large section of the community believed in the possibility of falling from grace, and Mr. Bryan would find that the volcanoes have long ceased to belch out fire and smoke. The doctrines of repentance and faith, the new birth, and Christian perfection are better understood and more widely believed in than ever. The infinite merit of the death of Christ is now preached everywhere, and, speaking broadly, the theology of Wesleyan Methodism, as preached by the pioneers, is the theology of Wales. That being so, the impartial historian must admit that Wesleyan Methodism has fully justified its existence in the Principality, and has succeeded in revolutionising the theology of the inhabitants generally. This fact is recorded, not with the feeling of denominational gratification, but with profound thankfulness to God. The clearer light of the Word of God has enabled us to see the differences between things. It is Christ that gives light. In that clearer light the glory and the beauty of our Lord are made manifest. The Churches of Wales come nearer year after year to President Lincoln’s ideal when he said, ‘With malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the light.’ When that ideal is realized, no sound will be heard from any Sunday school or home throughout Wales, but the healing voice of Christian charity.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE LITERATURE OF WELSH WESLEYAN METHODISM.

First Hymn-Book—Dr. Coke's Commentary—The Eurgrawn—Calvinism—Commentary on the Romans—Evangelical Treasury—Welsh Grammar—Biblical Dictionary—Cambrian Bibliology—Tune Books—Poets—Weakness—Growth—Present Position.

DR. THOMAS REES has admitted that the Welsh Wesleyans had taught other denominations in Wales how to produce a successful literature. The facts fully confirm this statement. In 1802, the Rev. John Hughes published a collection of hymns, thirteen hundred copies of which were sold before the end of the year. The first edition was printed by W. C. Jones, and in 1804 a second edition, with considerable alterations and improvements, was published and printed by Mr. Hemingway of Chester. Many of the hymns of Williams of Pantycelyn had been printed and sung all over Wales long before this, but it is believed the first collection of his hymns, prepared for the use of congregations, was that published by his son, the Rev. John Williams, in 1811. In 1805 a collection of hymns by Mr. John Bryan was published, better adapted for use in the Welsh congregations generally than that of Mr. Hughes, and several editions followed. During the first five years a number of booklets and pamphlets, taking up the Calvinistic controversy, were published, to which reference has been made in the preceding chapters. An effort was made at a very early period to bring out in the Welsh language Dr. Coke's *Commentary on the Bible*. The translation was a work which demanded

much time and the labourers were few, but the printing of it was the greatest difficulty. Mr. Hemingway began the task, then a Mr. Paris promised to bring out better work —a promise which he failed to fulfil. Mr. John Daniel of Carmarthen was the next who undertook the publication, but each succeeding attempt was less satisfactory than the last. Not only was the work, the paper, and the get-up disappointing, but the language, views, and even the meaning of the expounder were changed. The Rev. William Rowlands very strongly condemned the action of those connected with it, and said it was unjust to consider it a Wesleyan exposition. There is no doubt that Dr. Coke's Commentary suffered immensely in passing through so many hands.

In 1809 the *Eurgrawn Wesleyaidd* (the Wesleyan magazine) was printed and published at Dolgelly by Richard Jones, who was a local preacher and a most zealous and active Wesleyan Methodist. After three years it was printed in London, but in 1817 it was again printed at Dolgelly, and edited by one of the ministers. Some years later it was taken to Llanfaircaereinion, thence to Llanidloes, and for more than twenty years it has been printed by J. Mendus Jones in the city of Bangor. It has never failed to give its *eur grawn* every month. It has lived, moved, and had its being in the midst of persecutions and of disadvantages many, but it has always held its own, and its articles will bear favourable comparison with any periodical in the Welsh language. The names of David Rogers, Samuel Davies (1st), Edward Jones (3rd), Dr. Thomas Jones, Isaac Jenkins, William Rowlands, Dr. William Davies, and Samuel Davies (2nd), and other able men who have acted as editors, are a sufficient guarantee of its excellence to any unbiassed and intelligent reader who knows anything about the literature of Wales. Mr. Wesley's *Notes on the New Testament* were translated chiefly by the Rev. Hugh Hughes, and more recently revised and improved

by Rowland Hughes. Robert Humphreys prepared catechisms for the Sunday scholars, and Mr. John Williams (1st) a much larger one known as *Yr Egwyddorydd*, which might be styled a body of divinity in scriptural language, and which is second to none of its kind in excellence. In the Sunday schools throughout Wales it has been of incalculable benefit. Many booklets and pamphlets have been from the early days issued regularly from the Welsh Book-room. In 1836 the first volume of a critical commentary (*Esboniad Beirniadol*) was published. Nothing like it had appeared in the Welsh language. It was based chiefly on Dr. Clarke's, Benson's, and Matthew Henry, and other learned divines were frequently quoted. It gave the Welsh reader the benefit of the best and purest thought of all good men. John Hughes's *Horæ Britunnicæ* is a standard work, which is of more than national importance. There were catechisms many, those of the Conference included. *Divine Providence* was the subject of a very able book written by the Rev. William Rowlands about the same year. The following year the Rev. Samuel Davies (1st) published his able *Commentary on Romans IX.*, a large volume, and if brought up to date might still rank as one of the ablest works on the chapter available. The next great work was the *Evangelical Treasury*, by Samuel Davies (1st) and Dr. Thomas Jones, published in thirteen shilling parts. It was a great enterprise in those days,—in some things equal to Watson's Institutes, and it did for Wales what that work did for England. The Rev. John Jones (Idrisyn), an eminent clergyman and author, said of the work that it was equal to if not superior to any body of divinity in the English language. It is not so comprehensive as the Institutes of Watson and less cultured, but withal a massive work, and is notable also as the first of its kind published in the Welsh language. Shortly after this a large volume of sermons (fifty-five in number) by

Wesleyan preachers was published by Mr. Humphreys, Carnarvon, and these discourses are still greedily sought. A Welsh tune book was published by Mr. Jacob of Holywell, and another by the Rev. Robert Williams. Mr. J. Mendus Jones published a Welsh Grammar, which in the vernacular is second to none. Dr. William Davies's *Biblical Dictionary*, so far as it goes, has no superior. The beauty of its diction, its strength and clearness, will give it a prominent position among the best of Welsh books. If Dr. Davies had lived to enlarge the work to two or more volumes, as he evidently intended when he began to write the book, without doubt it would have taken a first place in the literature of his country. The Rev. William Rowlands's *Cambrian Bibliology* is a standard work of importance to the nation, and justly recognized as such. Smaller works on the Sabbath, the question of baptism, the Sacraments, volumes of sermons and essays on various subjects, by the Revs. Thomas Aubrey, Rowland Hughes, Ebenezer Morgan, William Rowlands, Isaac Jenkins, Richard Pritchard, and others, have been numerous. Biographies of Hugh Hughes, Samuel Davies, Thomas Aubrey, John Hugh Evans, and others, are widely known. In original music and poetry, the Wesleyans have not taken a foremost position. In congregational singing the early Methodists were noted, and in bringing out tune books they largely led the way. Those of Mr. William Jacob and the Rev. Robert Williams were the first of their kind. Thomas Jones, a worthy local preacher still living, although very aged, has published several good books of music, chiefly his own compositions, many of which possess considerable merit, and are sung throughout the Principality.

In recent years the Wesleyan Church has been able to rejoice in some eminent poets. The Archdruid Clwyd fardd is perhaps the oldest local preacher in Wales, and has occupied a first place among the bards for more than half a century, and the

late Rev. John Hugh Evans won a foremost place among the Welsh bards. The Rev. John Cadvan Davies has been the crowned bard on more than one occasion. The Rev. David Jones (B) has won a similar position. The works of the Rev. John Jones on the Atonement, the Bible, etc., and those of the Rev. John Evans (B), John Hughes (C), T. J. Humphreys, Owen Williams, William Evans, Hugh Jones (B), and T. O. Jones are so varied and important as to fill an honourable place in the Welsh literature of the present generation.

Mr. Wesley and his coadjutors did not see the prosperity they expected as the result of their labours in Wales, and it is difficult to say to what extent they prepared the way for those who came after them. Welsh Methodism began with the present century; it was small in its beginning. Harry Llwyd was a poor lay preacher in South Wales. He and Richard Harrison in North Wales were working, praying, exhorting in season and out of season, ignored by their fellow-men, laughed at, ridiculed, and persecuted; they lived simple, quiet, and unpretentious lives, prompted only by love to the Master, and an earnest desire to explain and defend the truth with regard to the kingdom of God.

Was Jones (Bathafarn) led by a kind providence to Manchester and to Oldham Street Chapel, and John Bryan to Chester and to the house of those godly women, in answer to the prayers of these good men? The great day will answer the question. The divine hand and the overruling of the Holy Spirit may at least be traced in connection with the movements of Jones, Bryan, and others. The men appointed by Conference, although the best available, humanly speaking, were not the men to send to Wales. Owen Davies could not preach in the Welsh language. And at that time the Nonconformist pulpits were supplied by some of the ablest preachers that the Principality was ever blessed with. The Welsh people were generally satisfied

with the doctrines preached, and the great revival had given new life to the old Calvinistic doctrines. Well might they ask, ‘O great mountain, who art thou, immense, immovable?’ But these few good men heard the divine call, ‘Sons of God, arise! speak the sanctifying word’; and in the name of the Lord and in the strength of His word they went forth, determined to live or die in the work. Their course was a stormy one. They were brought before the authorities, their lives were in danger, and they endured hardship like good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Their success was marvellous. The day of small things was not long their reward. They were soon assisted by a goodly band of able preachers, men who were able to hold their own in the pulpit and through the press with the best men of their day. They soon created a Church, a literature, and made a place for themselves amongst the Churches of the land. The withdrawal of so many able ministers immediately after the death of Dr. Coke was their next great trial, which told sadly upon the work just at the time when experience and pastoral oversight seemed the one thing needful to consolidate it. The agitations of 1818 and 1831 made a deep impression upon the work in North Wales, while that of 1849 wrought great mischief in South Wales. But during the last few years Wesleyan Methodism has been treated with consideration and kindness by the other Nonconformist bodies in Wales, and to-day its great danger arises rather from the respectable position it holds than from any outside hindrance. It is not as strong, numerically, as the Calvinistic, Congregational, and Baptist bodies, but its growth is steadily increasing. There are at the present time about 180 ministers, with 750 local preachers, 2050 class-leaders and stewards, about 700 churches, considerably over 40,000 members of Society, with nearly 100,000 hearers. And if the present generation, with their greater light, will devote their talents, their wealth, and their time with that zeal, devotion, and diligence which charac-

terized their fathers, Methodism will continue to progress, and become a still greater power for good in the land.

It is contended that Wesleyans have not taken their place as a body in connection with social reforms, a charge which is not without some ground for it, but as we have shown elsewhere the responsibility does not rest exclusively, nor chiefly, upon the Wesleyans. In the temperance reform, as Dr. John Thomas¹ shows, in the early history of the movement they were as active as any section of the Church, the services rendered that movement by the Revs. Griffith Hughes, Richard Bonner, Lot Hughes, John Owen (Gyffin,) John Davies, William Rowlands, Richard Pritchard, and others, were freely acknowledged by all. During the middle period in the history of the temperance movement the Wesleyans were lacking in their zeal in support of this good work. True, there were a few who were active and zealous, but for some years they were the exception, and during that period the decay of several churches was unmistakable. During the last twenty years the temperance sentiment has grown rapidly, and the Wesleyan body in Wales is not second to any in zeal and devotion in this work. The younger ministers and members are ever ready for every good work, as the result of which Methodism in most towns and villages takes a good position in every social and national movement. The Church is becoming more like the Samaritan, and less like the priest or Levite. The Methodist Church in the Principality is more orthodox than ever, ministers and laymen have a more intelligent grasp of Methodist doctrine and polity, of sacraments and class-meetings, and are more loyal to Connexionism and Circuit organization, and have more confidence in the mission of Methodism. They believe more fully in the majesty of truth and the power of sympathy, and look forward to the reorganization of society in its regeneration. The Wesleyan pulpit in Wales has been its glory; it has been a

¹ *History of Temperance*, p. 243.

powerful exponent of the Word of God, and no less than our Lord can say, ‘To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into this world, that I might bear witness unto the truth.’

Methodism has justified its existence in Wales, and if neither mournfully recalling the past, nor gazing feebly upon the future, but earnestly, loyally, and unitedly concentrating her energy of heart and mind upon the perfecting her own individual character, and the more absolute consecration of her talents, her genius, her wealth, her life, her all, to the service of God and humanity, she will soon discover a brighter dawn of a longer day of great prosperity.

‘Beyond this vale of tears there is a life above,
Unmeasured by the flight of years, and all that life is love.’

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